

ASSOCIATED PRESS TRIES TO PAINT CHURCH AS RACIST

[Bill Donohue](#)

As I pointed out in my book, [*The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes*](#), the scandal in the Catholic Church mostly occurred between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s. But don't tell that to the Associated Press (AP). They have a vested ideological reason for continuing the myth that nothing has changed. Worse, they are now suggesting the Church is racist.

"In the US, Black Survivors Are Nearly Invisible in the Catholic Clergy Sexual Abuse Crisis." This story, published November 29, is factually wrong. There is no "crisis" going on today. So the best the AP can do is to write a story on the situation in Maryland: some alleged victims from decades ago are coming forward seeking cash now that the statute of limitations has been lifted.

The latest data on the clergy sexual abuse found that between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022, there were 16 allegations made by minors during that time, seven of which were substantiated. That means that of the 52,387 members of the clergy, .013 percent of them had a substantiated allegation made against him. There is no institution in the nation where adults intermingle with minors on a regular basis which can match this outcome.

AP reported none of this. It could not. If it did it wouldn't have a story. But since they can't get the Church on this issue today, they've decided to play the racist card.

When I read this story, I wondered how the AP managed to come up with data showing a racist element in the abuse scandal. They didn't. There aren't any.

The AP admits that “The U.S. Catholic Church generally does not publicly track the race or ethnicity of clergy sexual abuse victims.” AP also struck out looking for data from the government. Referring to the report by the Maryland Attorney General’s office, it said it “leaves out any context about race.”

So if there are no data to support the AP claim that there is a “crisis” in the Church today, and there are no data to prove the Church is racist, what’s left to discuss? Anecdote. That’s it.

We learn about the plight of the Webster family where a young girl was abused by a priest. This is horrendous, but what does it have to do with the thrust of the AP story? The offense took place in 1993 and the priest was convicted and thrown out of the priesthood. Moreover, the Baltimore archdiocese wrote them a check for \$2.7 million.

There is more to this story than contemporary anecdotes. The reporter alleges there was racism in the Church in Baltimore in 1829! What a shocker. That really proves the Catholic Church, unlike every other institution in American society, had a racial problem decades before the Civil War.

If the AP did a story on black victims of sexual abuse in the public schools in Baltimore today, it would have enough information to fill a local public library, but they wouldn’t go near it. Nor will they do a story on all the black families in Baltimore who favor school choice and would like to send their children to a Catholic school.

We’ve been tracking and writing about bias in AP stories for decades. What is so ironic is that we have data on them that they don’t have on the Catholic Church. But the nation’s largest wire service, which is [funded by dozens of left-wing foundations](#), is rarely held accountable for its unprofessionalism.

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DRAG SHOW COMING TO ALABAMA SMALL TOWN

Bill Donohue

The Holly Jolly Drag Show will perform on December 8 at a local restaurant in Albertville, Alabama, outside of Huntsville. Jessica Turner's catering business, Baked and Boozy, is hosting the event. Because it is being held on private property, the local mayor, Tracy Honea, says he cannot do anything about it. He's right about that, but that doesn't mean that no response is justified.

Fortunately, several local Christian leaders, among them Justin Childers, pastor of Antioch Baptist Church in Albertville, are going to mount a protest: it will be held December 4-8, in advance of the event. He is urging local churches to "cross denominational lines" and join with him. We support him 100 percent.

Unfortunately, there are many naïve Americans who are unfazed by drag queen shows; others actually like them. Whether it is ignorance or malice, the facts are not open to dispute.

The purpose behind these events is to confuse children about sexuality. That's not an opinion. It's the explanation afforded by Judith Butler, a prominent lesbian professor: She proudly admits that these performances are a "subversive enterprise." So does Michelle Tomasik (who goes by the name Michelle Tea), the founder of Drag Queen Story Hour. She admits that her drag queen events are [targeted at children](#).

Homosexuals and the sexually confused (a.k.a. transgender persons) used to choose one day in late June as their day of celebration. Then it became a week. Then it became a month. But even that's not enough.

This Holly Jolly Drag Show is being held in December because it is Christmastime. It is not being done to complement, but to demean. Anyone who can't see this for what it is—the exploitation of Christmas for a sick cause—is deceiving himself. Or worse.

The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights is urging all Christians in Albertville, and surrounding towns, to join the protests and stand by Pastor Childers. Those who cannot attend should at least email him, showing your support for his effort.

We are contacting the 17 Christian churches in Albertville. We are also contacting St. William Catholic Church, as well as the Diocese of Birmingham.

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ILLINOIS ELITES KEEP BLACKS IN THEIR PLACE

Bill Donohue

The most important factor in accounting for upward mobility is the structure of the family. Kids who come from two parent families generally do well. Those who come from one-parent families do not.

The second most important factor in accounting for upward

mobility is the type and quality of the school. Kids who go to private and parochial schools generally do better than those who go to public schools (the exception being those who go to charter schools, who also do very well).

Thanks to decades of fighting school choice, promoted by liberals, black students are confined to the public schools. Those who fight school choice also fight charter schools, meaning black kids are forced to attend the worst of the public schools.

Do liberals hate blacks? No. But they are racists nonetheless. How so? As I pointed out in [*War on Virtue: How the Ruling Class Is Killing the American Dream*](#), they don't treat blacks as equals. They treat them as people who can't make it on their own, without the help of white liberal custodians, of course.

Illinois is a good example. As the *Wall Street Journal* pointed out, "It is now the first state to kill a major school choice program." We looked into those who killed it and found that it is the rich and powerful.

The head of the Chicago Teachers Union, Stacy Davis Gates, led the charge for the education industry. She enrolled her oldest child in De La Salle, a Catholic school; the tuition is almost \$15,000 a year. No one will ever ask her why she didn't think the public schools were good enough for her kid, but are apparently good enough for other kids.

Jan Schakowsky led the fight in the Illinois legislature to keep blacks from leaving the public schools. A powerful Democrat, her net worth is \$5 million. She has a house in Evanston and a vacation home on Lake Shore Drive in Michigan City, Indiana.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker could have led the charge to liberate black kids from the public schools, but did absolutely nothing to help the school choice movement. He is a billionaire. The

Pritzker Family Foundation is awash with money for schools that are already wealthy, but it spends not a dime on black parents wanting to send their children to a private or parochial school. Not surprisingly, the governor sends his kids to private schools.

As a result of what these rich and powerful people have done, 9,600 low-income children will see their scholarships end. It does not matter to these mostly white rich people who are working against them that more than 20,000 children, mostly black, are on the waiting list for a scholarship. They're finished.

If white racists wanted to keep blacks in their place, they couldn't do a better job than these Illinois "friends" of African Americans.

Contact Anne Caprara, Pritzker's chief-of-staff:
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SATANISTS AND TRANS ACTIVISTS DEFILE CHRISTMAS

[Bill Donohue](#)

The National Railroad Museum in Green Bay, Wisconsin is hosting a Festival of Trees representing 66 organizations. Only six of the trees are sponsored by Christian groups; the others are sponsored by various businesses. Two of the trees have ignited a backlash: one by a Satanic group, and the other by an LGBT group.

The Satanic Temple of Wisconsin is featuring a tree with an

ornament that says, "Hail Satan" (meant as a riposte to "Hail Santa"). There is also a depiction of Satan, as well as upside-down crosses. It says it does not believe in a "theistic" Satan, but much of what it says and does prove that it is Satan-friendly, to say the least.

The parent group of the Green Bay affiliate, The Satanic Temple (TST), is proud to be known as a champion of abortion-on-demand: it justifies abortion at any time of pregnancy and for any reason, seeing it as a source of liberation. It also raises money to further the cause.

When the Supreme Court struck down *Roe v. Wade*, returning the issue to the states, TST said "the abortion ban is inspired by a religious dogma that asserts that life begins at conception, which contravenes TST's belief that non-viable fetal tissue is part of the pregnant person and is free to be voluntarily removed."

What it calls "non-viable fetal tissue" is actually nascent human life. As such, the baby is independent of the life of the mother (TST chooses the term "pregnant person" to imply men can get pregnant, which shows its animus against science).

The conviction that life begins at conception may be shared by people of faith, but it is also grounded in biology. That is why it is laughable to read on the website of TST that "Beliefs should conform to one's best scientific understanding of the world, [and] one should take care never to distort scientific facts to fit one's beliefs."

It is not religious Americans opposed to abortion who are out of step with science: it is rabid anti-science abortion advocates like TST.

TST also says we should all demonstrate "compassion and empathy." They must have given themselves an exemption: They feature a fundraising gimmick on their website named, "Samuel Alito's Mom's Satanic Abortion Clinic," in reference to the

Supreme Court justice who wrote the majority opinion overturning *Roe*. They also sell condoms with an image of all nine Supreme Court justices on it.

The Trans Christmas tree is less offensive, but it does have ornaments with the inscription "Drag Queen" and "Be Weird." Atop the tree is an angel holding a rainbow flag. The Green Bay group that is sponsoring the tree says it stands for "non-binary, cross-dressing, transgender persons." Its affinity with the National Railroad Museum was made clear when one of its most active members, Justin Tenpenny, was hired by the Museum to be its Marketing and Communications officer.

Perhaps the most disingenuous person involved in this anti-Christmas scam is Jacqueline Frank, the CEO of the National Railroad Museum.

When asked why she allowed the Satanists, she invoked the tired refrain of inclusion. According to a local Green Bay news source, she said she "would not reject an organization simply because it goes against certain values or ways of life, traditional or not." Really? So if the Klan wanted to be included in an event honoring Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., Frank would welcome them?

"I think there's a lot to be said of being able to include everybody, to respect everyone and to promote dignity for everybody," Frank said. How the dignity of Christians is being respected by allowing Satanists to defile Christmas needs to be explained.

It does not help Frank's decision for her to say, "We're not discriminating against anyone." The issue is not discrimination—it is hostility to religion. And that is unconstitutional.

In the 1971 *Lemon v. Kurtzman* ruling, Chief Justice Warren Burger wrote that the Constitution "affirmatively mandates accommodation, not merely tolerance, of all religions, and

forbids hostility toward any (my italics)."

There is no other way to interpret the TST anti-Christmas display at the Museum than to say that it is demonstrating hostility to Christianity.

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THANKSGIVING TRIBUTE TO FAMILIES

[Bill Donohue](#)

Thanksgiving is the quintessential family get-together event, so I thought it apropos to share my thoughts on what makes good families tick.

As a sociologist who has taught college classes on the family, and as one who has written extensively on the subject, it is my considered judgment that strong families are not built on luck or happenstance: it takes work. Moreover, the right prescriptions must be honored by all family members.

Let's begin with structure. The right structure matters. Despite what some pundits assert, there is a gold standard, and that is the two-parent family. While there are good one-parent families, and bad two-parent families, in most cases one-parent families are a breeding ground for failure. Children raised in these families are less likely to do well in school and more likely to get into trouble; this is especially true of boys.

In my book, [War on Virtue: How the Ruling Class is Killing the American Dream](#), I point out that Asians, Jews, Mormons and

Nigerians are the most successful demographic groups in the country, as measured by academic achievement and income. All four are known for their intact families.

It should also be said that two parents of the same sex are no substitute for two parents of the opposite sex. Boys and girls need role models they can identify with. They have different needs, some of which are best served by an adult of their same sex. They develop differently and require the tutoring that only a father and a mother can provide.

Selflessness is also important. It is a key to true love. Parents, in particular, have to be able to exercise self-giving, putting the interests of their children first. True love is conditioned on doing something for others, which, in turn means making sacrifices. That requires selflessness. Otherwise, expressions of love amount to nothing more than rhetorical flourishes.

Spending time together as a family is a third ingredient. Family dinners, while not always possible, should be the norm, not the exception. This means, among other things, limiting time on social media. It is a sad sight to see family members at home, or in a restaurant, sitting around staring at their phones instead of engaging each other in conversation.

Religion is critical to building good families. There is plenty of evidence that shows that the practice of religion has a positive effect on children and on society. Children who attend religious services are building social capital, a key to success.

A fifth element is the inculcation of virtue. In my research, I found that self-discipline, personal responsibility and perseverance were the most vital of the virtues that account for success in school and in the workplace. Unfortunately, our ruling class is warring against these virtues.

Duty must be stressed. Throughout most of history, families

stayed together more out of reciprocal obligations than love. "Honor thy father and thy mother" is suggestive of this verity.

A seventh attribute is providing family members with affection and recognition, two human characteristics that are universal. Every human being, of all ages, needs them both, and when they are absent, trouble follows.

Children should be given responsibilities before awarded rights. Today, it is just the opposite. A child who does not act responsibly will not only fail in life, he is likely to eviscerate the rights of others.

Accountability is a ninth factor. Children must be held accountable for their behavior, and not cuddled when they act out. Similarly, they should be held accountable for their homework, without which they are not likely to do well in school.

Finally, strong families are built on respect for authority. Parents should be friendly with their children, but never their friends. Children need to respect authority, beginning with their parents. Teachers, the clergy, the police, and other adult authority figures, also need to be respected.

There are so many challenges these days making it hard to build strong families. Being aware of them, and being prepared to deal with them, is the first step to overcoming them.

JESUIT-RUN SCHOOLS STILL LACK

FREE SPEECH

[Bill Donohue](#)

The latest report on free speech on college campuses has just been published by the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE), “2024 College Free Speech Rankings.

For the last several years, four Jesuit-run schools have ranked among the worst in the nation when it comes to respecting freedom of speech: Georgetown University, Fordham University, Boston College and Marquette University. They are still at the bottom of the barrel.

The latest FIRE survey of 248 colleges and universities lists five Catholic schools that achieved a “Poor” rating; the only non-Jesuit school is Duquesne University. Boston College (#229), Marquette (#230), Duquesne (#241), Fordham (#244) and Georgetown (#245) made for an embarrassing cluster of Catholic schools. Georgetown even earned a “Very Poor” rating.

The most intolerant institution of higher education in the nation, coming in last at #248, was Harvard University: it actually earned the lowest score possible, 0.00, meriting the tag, “Abysmal.” Why would anyone who has a serious interest in academic excellence go to such a close-minded school? Graduates may land a good job, but can they think for themselves?

Some of the key findings in this year’s report are disconcerting, if not disgusting.

The schools in the bottom five, which includes Fordham and Georgetown, are not only intolerant of controversial ideas on campus, they succeeded in censoring speech 81 percent of the time.

What subjects set off the speech police the most? Abortion is

#1. God forbid a student accepts the findings of science, and agrees with the teachings of the Catholic Church, that life begins at conception. Such speech simply cannot be tolerated by those who fancy themselves as “open-minded.”

As usual, it's left-wing students, dogmatically following the ideological predilections of their professors, who are the most intolerant of free speech. “Student opposition to allowing controversial conservative speakers on campus ranged from 57% to 72%, depending on the speaker. In contrast, student opposition to controversial liberal speakers ranged from 29% to 43%.”

Incredibly, 45% of today's college students believe that it is okay to block other students from attending a speech—this is up from 37% last year. More than a quarter, 27%, say it is acceptable to engage in violence to stop a speech they don't like—it's up from 20% last year.

Have our colleges become hotbeds of fascism? Some are moving very quickly in that direction.

Importantly, there are some schools that respect free speech. The top five are: Michigan Technological University, Auburn University, University of New Hampshire, Oregon State University and Florida State University.

It might be worthwhile for the alumni of the Jesuit-run schools cited near the bottom of the free-speech rankings to demand that their school officials meet with administrators of the top five schools—all of which are public universities—to find out what they are doing right.

In short, these Catholic institutions need an examination of conscience. They are taking the hard-earned money of the students' parents and abusing it in ways that are positively sinful.

PHONY CHRISTIAN GROUP RIPS BISHOP STRICKLAND

[Bill Donohue](#)

Faithful America is a far left-wing entity (it is not a true organization) that pretends to be Christian while working hard to undermine Christianity. It has a particular hatred of Catholics. Its latest salvo is hurled at Bishop Joseph Strickland.

Newsweek, which acts like a PR outlet for Faithful America, said that “Thousands of Christians have signed a petition thanking Pope Francis for removing Joseph Strickland as the bishop of Tyler, Texas.”

Petitions are normally signed by those who seek to persuade persons or organizations to do something they haven’t yet done; they are not a medium for expressing gratitude. But petitions are what Faithful America likes to do, if not much else.

Last year they launched a petition demanding that Rep. Nancy Pelosi, a rabid advocate of abortion rights, be permitted to receive communion wherever she goes to Mass. The year before they issued a petition condemning Los Angeles Archbishop José Gomez for giving a speech in Spain they didn’t like. After Joe Biden became president, they petitioned the Left to attack the United States Conference of Bishops: they were upset because some bishops questioned Biden’s Catholic bona fides (he rejects many Church teachings on key moral issues).

Faithful America is gloating over the removal of Bishop Strickland. They said of his ouster, “this action is wonderful

news for truth, equality, and our work together for a more inclusive and loving church.” In other words, by excluding a bishop the pope made things more inclusive.

Strickland is a “partisan false prophet who has absolutely no business continuing to hold a position of moral authority in the Body of Christ.”

These are the words of Rev. Nathan Empsall, the executive director of Faithful America.

So who is this guy? Empsall is not a Catholic. He is an Episcopalian priest. Thus he has no standing in evaluating the authenticity of the Catholic clergy. Moreover, we’re not even sure he is a man. Anyone who likes to be referred to as he/him makes us wonder.

Empsall boasts that Faithful America is “the largest online community of grassroots Christians” in the nation. Wrong.

To begin with, there is no such thing as an “online community.” It would be more honest to say that Faithful America has a website. That’s it. It is also quite small. Most important, there is nothing “grassroots” about this phony Christian entity—it is funded by George Soros and other left-wing organizations, such as the Arcus Foundation. Predictably, it is loved by the Southern Poverty Law Center, the corrupt radical behemoth.

Further proof that Faithful America is a fraud can be seen by considering its contact information. For example, it is now advertising for a new Digital Community Organizer. Whoever gets the job, unlike those who work at the Catholic League and report to the office every weekday, can do it remotely.

“This position involves telecommuting and working in a virtual office, and will require consistent phone and internet access at your home office location.” Not surprisingly, candidates can be “located anywhere in the contiguous U.S.” What they

have against the Hawaiians and Alaskans they do not say.

Employees can work from home because there is no office (nor is there a phone number). The address listed on their website is "206 Elm Street, Unit #202898" in New Haven, Connecticut. That is the street address of USPS Yale Station. Oh, yes, Amazon has a locker at that address as well.

So how does anyone get in contact with Empsall if there is no office or phone number? The website has a form for people to fill out and submit. Further proof that Faithful America is run by phonies.

Empsall and his little Soros-funded crew are frauds, and so are media outlets such as Newsweek for pretending otherwise.

Since Faithful America is a mirage, the best contact we can provide is that of the senior news reporter for Newsweek who wrote this story, Khaleda Rahman. She is stationed in the U.K.

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PAPAL CRITICS AND DISSIDENTS

[Bill Donohue](#)

Last week, Pope Francis relieved Bishop Joseph Strickland of Tyler, Texas of his duties. Though no reason was given, it is widely believed that the pope was not happy with the bishop's criticisms of him. But when it comes to those who have publicly denounced the teachings of the Catholic Church, they are received with open arms.

On October 17, Pope Francis welcomed Catholic dissidents who

have previously been condemned by U.S. cardinals and bishops. He met for almost an hour with Sister Jeannine Gramick, who, along with Fr. Robert Nugent, founded New Ways Ministry (NWM) in 1977; it is a radical pro-homosexual group. She was wearing a habit for the photo-op, something she rarely does.

After the meeting, Gramick praised the pope for his “openness” to same-sex blessings.

Sr. Gramick was best friends with the most notorious serial child rapist priest in American history, Fr. Paul Shanley. She credited him with having “motivated her to activism.” More telling, after Shanley’s predatory behavior was made public, she said she “grieved for the man I had not seen in almost 20 years, but whose principles and whose advocacy for the downtrodden I had applauded for three decades.” That he molested the downtrodden didn’t seem to matter.

Journalist Maureen Orth (who was married to “Meet the Press” host Tim Russert) ripped Gramick for never once speaking to any of Shanley’s victims.

Fr. James Martin, who was given a prominent position at the Synod on Synodality in Rome—at the request of the pope—said in 2017 that he would like to “canonize” Gramick.

Gramick has long been a thorn in the side of the Catholic Church. After the publication of a book by her and Nugent, *Building Bridges: Gay and Lesbian Reality and the Catholic Church*, they were investigated by the Vatican in 1998. It was determined that there were “serious deficiencies in their writings and pastoral activities, which were incompatible with the fullness of Christian morality.”

Pope Francis did not meet with Gramick out of the blue. In fact, he commended this rogue entity at the end of 2021. At that time, I said he had been manipulated. It is now clear that I was wrong.

After the pope spoke kindly about NWM in a note to Gramick, I learned that the Vatican listed it on its resource page for the Synod.

Consequently, on December 15, 2021 I wrote to Cardinal Mario Grech, Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops, about the propriety of providing a link to the NWM webinar on synodality.

In my letter, I recounted that in 1999 Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, issued a document detailing how Sister Gramick and Fr. Nugent of NWM had been sanctioned by two major Church bodies for their public misrepresentations of Church teachings on sexuality.

Ratzinger wrote that in 1984, "James Cardinal Hickey, the Archbishop of Washington, following the failure of a number of attempts at clarification, informed them [NWM] that they could no longer undertake their activities in that Archdiocese. At the same time, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and for Societies of Apostolic Life ordered them to separate themselves totally and completely from New Ways Ministry, adding that they were not to exercise any apostolate without faithfully presenting the Church's teaching regarding the evil of homosexual acts."

He then offered evidence of the many attempts by Church officials to persuade Gramick and Nugent to abide by Church teachings on this subject. He concluded that they "are permanently prohibited from any pastoral work involving homosexual persons and are ineligible, for an undetermined period, for any office in their respective religious institutes."

Three years later, the new head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Archbishop Tarcisio Bertone, wrote that "New Ways Ministry does not promote the authentic teaching of

the Catholic Church.”

Also in 2002, Archbishop Thomas Kelly of Louisville told organizers of the group’s conference that they should not celebrate the Eucharist at a NWM event. Following suit in 2007 was St. Paul-Minneapolis Archbishop Harry Flynn: he barred NWM’s national conference from celebrating the Eucharist.

In 2010, Cardinal Francis George, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, stated that he can assure Catholics that “in no manner is the position proposed by New Ways Ministry in conformity with Catholic teaching and in no manner is this organization authorized to speak on behalf of the Catholic Church or to identify itself as a Catholic organization.”

In 2011, Cardinal Donald Wuerl of the Washington Archdiocese, and chairman of the Committee on Doctrine, joined with Oakland Bishop Salvatore Cordileone, and chairman of the bishops’ Ad Hoc Committee on the Defense of Marriage, issuing an affirmation of Cardinal George’s denunciation of NWM.

This prompted me to ask Grech, “Were all the senior members of the Catholic Church wrong about NWM? Or is the decision to welcome them to the synodal process wrong? They can’t both be right.”

He never replied. We now know why.

The disparate treatment afforded Bishop Strickland and NWM dissidents is as clear as a bell.

BILL MAHER'S BIGOTRY IS BAKED INTO HIS DNA

[Bill Donohue](#)

Much has been made of Bill Maher's recent attacks on woke politics, and he is quite good at it. Unfortunately, his anti-Catholic bigotry is so ingrained that he is incapable of changing on that score.

On the November 10 episode of HBO's "Real Time," Maher used his "New Rules" segment to look at the utter collapse of public schools and used it to lambast Catholics.

Maher began by noting that public schools have not only declined in academic quality but also have become less safe due to a lack of discipline. This has prompted many responsible and loving parents to seek alternatives.

Maher notes that it is "not just the weirdo Christian families" seeking a better choice. In fact, he explains that millions of parents are looking to Catholic schools as an option to ensure their children actually learn something and are safe while they are there. In fairness to Maher, he notes that Catholic school students' show fantastic academic achievements and in part this stems from the schools insistence on strict discipline.

However, in his next breath, Maher dove into a verbal lashing of Catholicism. He claimed that parents turning to Catholic schools reveal how bad the situation is because "to get a no bullsh*t education now, you have to turn to the place that's completely based on bullsh*t."

Instead, Maher suggested a better solution would be "a chain of non-Catholic Catholic schools." He even notes that with so many celebrities opening their own failed alternative schools

that he might get involved in education. He proposed making “Bill Maher’s Catholic School.” He bills it like a “traditional Catholic school, just without the religion and the molesting.”

If Maher were truly concerned about the safety of children, he would call out the public schools for their atrocious record when it comes to handling child predators. They are the ones plagued with this problem today, not Catholic schools.

While Maher may have changed somewhat, his tired refrain of beating up on Catholics suggests that his anti-Catholic bigotry is baked into his DNA.

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ELECTION LESSONS FOR PRO-LIFERS

[Bill Donohue](#)

Election day was a bad day for pro-lifers. They need to learn some lessons if progress is to be made.

It is not easy to win when the pro-life side is outspent by enormous margins, and that is exactly what happened in Ohio, Kentucky and Virginia.

The pro-life side in Ohio was outspent by a margin of \$24.4 million to \$16.3 million. In Kentucky, the figures were \$47.8 million to \$29.2 million, respectively. In Virginia, \$35.2 million was raised by Democrats for the state legislative races, compared to \$27.6 million for the Republicans. When

Virginia Republican Party chairman Rich Anderson met with senior members of the Republican National Committee on Columbus Day, asking for help in raising money, he was turned down.

Money is tied to voter turnout, and the Democrats succeeded on that measure in all three states. While money is important, there are lessons that transcend this issue that pro-lifers must grasp.

It is a staple in pro-life circles to say they need to do a better job in messaging. That's true but it belies a bigger problem: their message is wrong.

The fact is the American people will never vote for a complete ban on abortion, and it is about time our side got the message. In Ohio, the law signed by Gov. Mike DeWine in 2019 allowed for no exceptions for rape or incest. In Kentucky, the law that went into effect after *Roe v. Wade* was overturned allowed for no exceptions.

These laws are a non-starter. Moreover, they play into the hands of demagogues. In Kentucky, the pro-abortion side ran ads saying, "To tell a 12-year-old girl she must have the baby of her stepfather who raped her is unthinkable." Even in Virginia, where the law allowed for exceptions, ads were run saying the pro-life candidates "will take away your rights."

Some may say that if allowing for the usual exceptions didn't work in Virginia, what's wrong with an absolute ban? For one, an absolute ban guarantees failure. Second, as the *Wall Street Journal* put it, Virginia witnessed "razor-edge races [that] hardly amount to a grand rebuke of Gov. [Glenn] Youngkin." In fact, the Democrats lost in key swing districts.

The moral issue is paramount. Is it acceptable for Catholics to vote for a candidate who is not opposed to all abortions? The answer is a qualified yes. If the choice is between candidates who are all in the pro-abortion camp, though not to

the same degree, then the candidate who is the least pro-abortion can in good conscience be chosen.

Intent matters as well. If the reason why someone votes for a pro-abortion candidate has nothing to do with his support for abortion—it might have to do with the candidate's support for union rights—then that is also an acceptable reason to vote for such a candidate. If the vote is cast to support abortion, that is illicit.

Consider what Saint John Paul II said in *Evangelium Vitae* about Catholic politicians.

He wrote that “when it is not possible to overturn or completely abrogate a pro-abortion law, an elected official, whose absolute personal opposition to procured abortion was well known, could licitly support proposals aimed at limiting the harm done by such a law and lessening its negative consequences at the level of general opinion and public morality. This does not in fact represent an illicit cooperation with an unjust law, but rather a legitimate and proper attempt to limit its evil aspects.”

Similarly, as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (the future Pope Benedict XVI) put it, “When a Catholic does not share a candidate's stand in favor of abortion and/or euthanasia, but votes for that candidate *for other reasons*, it is considered remote material cooperation, *which can be permitted in the presence of proportionate reasons*.”

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has issued statements that mirror what these two popes have said. For example, they have said that in circumstances where all the candidates are pro-abortion, Catholics may vote for the one who is “deemed less likely to advance such a morally flawed position and more likely to pursue other authentic human goods.”

In practical terms, the USCCB is saying that if one of the

candidate is pro-abortion but is opposed to forcing doctors to perform abortions and sex-reassignment surgery, and the other pro-abortion candidate wants to do just that, then voting for the former candidate is acceptable.

The choices we are faced with are not always ideal, but prudence dictates that we choose the lesser of two evils (for the reasons Saint John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI enumerated).

The bottom line should be clear—the ultimate goal is the end of abortion. In the process of getting there, however, we should be prepared to get what we can realistically get now and then proceed to get more. Those who take an “all or nothing” stance should be prepared to get nothing. It is better that some lives be saved than none at all.