

WAR IS UGLY; NOT RESPONDING IS UGLIER

[Bill Donohue](#)

“Witness to War: World Trade Center Bombing.” That was the title of the lead story in the October 2001 edition of *Catalyst*. I made a personal statement about what we witnessed that day: we saw the Twin Towers crumble before us.

Once again, I am taking the occasion to address war, only this time the war is against Israel. I am writing this at home on the “Day of Rage,” Friday, October 13. I closed the office today because of the huge anti-Jewish rally in Times Square, just blocks from our office. I have seen enough of the New York crazies to know what to expect.

Catholics are fortunate to have a long history of Church teachings on war. Thanks to St. Augustine and St. Aquinas, it is helpful to recall what “Just War” theory is.

For a war to be just, it must abide by several criteria. There must be a just cause; it should meet the standard of comparative justice; a legitimate authority must execute it; the right intention must be evident; the probability of success should be operative; the means used should be proportionate to the situation; and it should be done as a last resort.

Israel has met these criteria. The vicious attack on Israeli citizens, including the beheading of children, was unprovoked. Even more vile, its leaders pledged to kill all the Jews. That’s what Hamas has said over and over again. Ergo, Israel had a just cause.

It also met the definition of comparative justice, meaning the injustice suffered by Israelis justifies the damage done to

Hamas. The decision to defend Israel was made by its elected leader. The prime minister's intent was noble—to defend his people. Given the Israelis past success in combat situations, the probability they will prevail is realistic.

Israel alerted residents of Gaza to leave their neighborhood—giving them ample time to clear out—before their soldiers entered, thus was their response proportionate to current conditions. Despite decades of diplomacy, and the total withdrawal of soldiers from Gaza in 2005—giving the Palestinians what they wanted—it was not enough to satisfy Hamas, which is why they attacked Israel two years later. Thus, the decision to fight back was the last resort.

The left-wing indoctrinated American students who hate Israel also hate America. As a Catholic leader, a veteran, and a professor, I know what motivates these maniacs. Israel had no other choice but to defend itself and seek to defeat Hamas, once and for all.

Pray for Israel, but also pray for those innocent Palestinians who have long suffered under Hamas.

UNPROVOKED ATTACK BY “SNL” ON PRIESTS

[Bill Donohue](#)

The violence unleashed by Hamas against innocent Jews—in an unprovoked attack—needs to be roundly condemned by everyone. We should also condemn expressions of hatred that are non-violent; they may incite some to act. What happened on “Saturday Night Live” this weekend is an example of this

genre.

Out of the blue, “SNL” host Pete Davidson said the following in his opening monologue:

“You guys, I’m from Staten Island, so this is a big deal to me. I grew up right around here. If you don’t know what Staten Island is, it’s the only island in the world with a worse reputation than Epstein’s somehow [the reference was to Jeffrey Epstein, the serial molester]. But in Staten Island, the kids molest the priests. Everything’s backwards down there.”

Davidson’s bigotry runs deep. To launch an unprovoked attack on priests—there was no segue whatsoever—shows his pathological hatred. It is a sign of our times that innocent priests are still fair game to be smeared, and that the guilty parties pay no price for their vitriol.

Davidson tragically lost his dad, a member of the FDNY, on 9/11. It’s too bad that event didn’t trigger in him a commitment to fighting hatred. Instead, he has become a promoter of it.

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TRANS DOMESTIC TERRORISM

There is a violent streak among trans activists that is underreported in the media. The following events all took place this year.

February 2023—National Public Radio (NPR) ran a story on Rainbow Reload, a group of trans activists training with

firearms in New Hampshire. While NPR usually opposes the 2nd Amendment, in this particular story, NPR frames these activists in a heroic light noting that LGBT people are under attack across America. One member of Rainbow Reload said he joined the group because “there’s been an uptick in groups that have been protesting drag story times and drag shows. And it felt like I needed to learn how to protect myself.” NPR concludes the piece with the line “the guns over their shoulders a source of security in a world that feels full of threats,” further highlighting the sense that trans activists are in an armed conflict for their survival.

February 2023—Approximately 150 trans activists stormed the Oklahoma Capitol. Sporting trans flags, these radical protestors occupied the atrium of the Capitol building to oppose legislation aimed at protecting young people from medical procedures for “gender reassignment.” The trans activists then broke into the balconies chanting “This is our house!”

March 2023—When three King County Sheriff’s Deputies served an eviction notice on Nathan Stolsig, a man pretending to be a woman, he opened fire on the deputies and a shootout ensued. One of the deputies was shot when a bullet struck him above his body armor. Stolsig, who went by the name Eucytus, was a trans activist and a member of the Democratic Socialists of America. He was affiliated with Antifa and had been preparing to be evicted by barricading his apartment. Surrounded by the deputies with no way out, Stolsig took his own life. The local NPR social justice reporter presented this story as a tragic suicide of a trans individual and left out that Stolsig injured a deputy in the shoot out and his ties to Antifa.

March 2023—Audrey Hale, a woman pretending to be a man, entered the Covenant Christian School in Nashville, Tennessee, and proceeded to go on a shooting spree. In the span of approximately 15 minutes she fired over 200 rounds and killed six people, including three nine-year-old students.

Immediately following this tragedy, local police reported that Hale had written a lengthy manifesto. Local police also confirmed the attack was targeted, and there was strong reason to believe Hale's transgender identity played a part in attacking the Christian school. At the time of writing, Hale's manifesto has not been released. Many LGBT groups have been calling for the manifesto to be withheld from the public.

March 2023—Several hours after the shooting at Covenant Christian school, Joselyn Berry, press secretary to Arizona Governor Katie Hobbs (D), posted on Twitter a GIF from the movie "Gloria" showing a woman holding two pistols with the caption "Us when we see transphobes." While Berry would resign in disgrace several days later, her GIF appears to justify using violence against people who disagree with transgenderism.

March 2023—Hundreds of trans activists took over the Texas Capitol to protest legislation that would protect children from puberty blockers and genital mutilation. The radical protestors began chanting and then staged a die in "to symbolize how many trans lives that could be lost if the legislation became law."

March 2023—When the Kentucky State Legislature overrode Governor Andy Beshear's (D) veto of legislation to protect minors from transgender procedures, hundreds of trans activists stormed the Kentucky Capitol building. Capitol security and the Kentucky State Police struggled to remove protesters from the gallery. Nineteen people were arrested.

March 2023—In response to the Covenant Christian School shooting, approximately 400 radical leftists stormed the Tennessee Capitol building. Supported by Democrats in the State Legislature, the protesters attempted to shift the focus of the tragedy at Covenant Christian School to focus on gun control rather than the targeted attack by a trans radical.

March 2023—Police in Colorado Springs arrested William Whitworth, a man pretending to be a woman who goes by the name Lily. Whitworth began behaving violently and threatened to go on a shooting spree at local schools when his family called the police. When police arrived, they found Whitworth drunk in his room and arrested him charging him with two counts of “attempted first-degree murder.” The local district attorney’s office confirmed that “Whitworth is in the process of transitioning to female.”

April 2023—Wyoming Minority Whip Karlee Provenza (D) posted a meme of an elderly woman shooting an AK-47 with the caption “Auntie Fa Says, Protect Trans Folks Against Fascists and Bigots.” Auntie Fa is a reference to Antifa. Further the meme implies anyone opposed to transgenderism is either a fascist or a bigot and should be resisted with physical violence.

April 2023—Etsy, the popular e-commerce site dedicated to the buying and selling of handmade and vintage items, has a slew of merchandise that promotes violent transgender rhetoric. One such item is a “Progress Pride” flag with an AK-47 assault rifle superimposed on it and the caption “ARMED QUEERS BASH BACK.” A sweatshirt reads, “Respect my pronouns or yours will be was/were.” Meanwhile, there is a t-shirt with the picture of three daggers and the words “Protect Trans Kids.” A sticker of a cat holding a knife reads “Respect my gender pronouns or I will identify as a problem.” Another sticker of a sword features the phrase, “Respect my pronouns or die by my sword.”

April 2023—After San Francisco State University students could not shout down former NCAA swimmer Riley Gaines, a mob of radical transgender activists stormed the stage. Turning out the lights, they used the chaos to rush past her security. Police eventually got her out of the room, but not before a man in a dress punched her several times in the head. Gaines was then trapped for three hours in an empty classroom surrounded by the transgender activists. One of the mob demanded cash to ensure Gaines’ safe passage off campus.

April 2023—A male teacher, who pretends to be a woman, threatened to shoot his students at Fox Chapel Middle School in Spring Hill, Florida. The teacher was upset about students making fun of him on social media. When school administrators recommended he talk to the school guidance counselor about his “bad thoughts,” the teacher admitted that he “wanted to shoot some students....”

April 2023—Hundreds of pro-transgender protesters tried to disrupt a debate at the University of Pittsburgh featuring Michael Knowles. Knowles had previously raised the ire of transgender activists when he declared that transgenderism needed to be eradicated from public life. When the debate began, a few radicals that got past security tried to shout down Knowles; however, they were unsuccessful. Outside of the event the protestors set off fireworks and other explosives. They burnt Knowles in effigy. Police had to lockdown parts of campus for nearly two hours. Order was not restored until 90 minutes after Knowles finished his remarks.

April 2023—During a debate on banning transgender procedures for minors, Montana State Rep. Zooey Zephyr (D-Missoula), a man pretending to be a woman, said, “The only thing I will say is if you vote yes on this bill and yes on these amendments, I hope the next time there’s an invocation when you bow your heads in prayer, you see the blood on your hands.” Because these comments appeared to be in reference to the shooting at Covenant Christian School and implied that the law would threaten the very existence of the trans community justifying their further retaliations, Zephyr was sanctioned by Montana State House and barred from debating on the legislation. When the Montana State House moved to pass the legislation, trans activists stormed the Capitol building. The radicals proceeded to take over the gallery and attempted to break the doors of the chamber when Zephyr was not permitted to speak. As part of their demonstration, the trans activists threw red gloves, symbolizing the “blood on your hands” that Zephyr had

threatened earlier. Riot police were sent in to restore order. In the ensuing clash with the mob of trans activists, seven radicals were arrested.

April 2023—Trans activists vandalized the home of Utah State Senator Mike Kennedy. The radicals spray painted “FASH” (an abbreviation for fascist) and “THESE TRANNIES BASH BACK” on the front of his home in response to legislation he introduced to protect children from transgender procedures.

April 2023—Thomas Jay White, a man pretending to be a woman going by the name Tara Jay, is a prominent trans influencer on TikTok. In a recent video, White threatened to shoot anyone that prevented him from using the women’s restroom. In another video, White claims he wishes he could see several high profile figures who have spoken out against transgenderism hanging from a rope and contemplates throwing a party to celebrate their deaths.

April 2023—A group of concerned citizens from Protect Texas Kids protested an all-ages drag show held at Fort Brewer and Pizza in Fort Worth. They were met by black-clad counter-protesters from the Elm Fork John Brown Gun Club. Many of the counter-protestors were equipped with tactical gear and armed with handguns and long guns. At first, the Elm Fork John Brown Gun Club members began screaming in the faces of the protestors while they were silently praying and proceeded to use pepper spray on the protestors. This was not the first time the Elm Fork John Brown Gun Club has attempted to intimidate Protect Texas Kids with violence. The gun club has gone to at least 16 demonstrations to verbally and physically harass the protestors. The Club is affiliated with Antifa.

May 2023—Trans activists disrupted a meeting of the Westwood Regional School District in Bergen County, New Jersey when the school board voted to allow schools only to display the American and state flags. The trans activists shouted down the school board members, and police were required to remove

unruly speakers from the microphone to restore decorum.

June 2023—When mostly Armenian and Hispanic parents protested the Glendale Unified School District in southern California for indoctrinating their children, trans activists, answering a call from Antifa, confronted and physically attacked the parents. Three people were arrested on various charges.

August 2023—When parents demonstrated outside of the Los Angeles Unified School District headquarters urging the district to implement a policy to notify parents if their children identified as transgender, trans activists confronted the parents. The scene quickly turned violent as the trans activists attacked the parents and the police that were attempting to keep the two groups apart. Two trans activists were arrested and several more were taken into custody.

TRANS FOSTER PARENTS PUT KIDS AT RISK

Bill Donohue

The Biden administration's [foster care proposal](#), which seeks to limit the rights of foster parents with trans children, says not a word about a very serious issue, namely the propriety of allowing transgender couples to adopt children. Quite frankly, the history of violence within this segment of the population—assaulting each other—is so serious that it makes no sense not to address this issue. Indeed, it is delinquent not to do so.

Throughout the proposal, there are several references to safety in the home, as in, “each child must receive a

placement that is safe.” It says quite clearly that “hostility, mistreatment, or abuse” will not be tolerated.

Surely the administration must know about the legacy of violence that plagues the trans community, but if it doesn’t, it should. The evidence is startling, and it is mounting.

It’s not always easy to find data on this issue, but there are a number of studies on “intimate partner violence” (IPV) that are enlightening. IPV refers to violence committed by someone who is intimately involved with his or her partner, regardless of marital, sexual orientation or gender status.

Let’s look at some early data and make our way forward.

“The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey,” published by the National Center for Transgender Equality, found that with regard to trans adults, “More than half (54%) of respondents have experienced some form of intimate partner violence. More than one-third (35%) experienced physical violence by an intimate partner, compared to 30% of the U.S. adult population. Nearly quarter (24%) experienced severe physical violence by a current or former partner, compared with 18% of the U.S. population.”

Also in 2015, the Williams Institute, a think tank at UCLA Law, published a report that reviewed 42 studies on IPV among LGBT people. The one study that “directly compared the lifetime prevalence of IPV among transgender and cisgender people” [those who accept their biologically determined sex] found that “31.1% of transgender people and 20.4% of cisgender people had ever experienced IPV or dating violence.” Of the three studies on lifetime violence among trans persons, between “25.0% to 47.0%” report being victimized.

In 2019, researchers from Syracuse University and the University of Maryland, College Park, published their findings on sexual and gender minority youth and found that they “disproportionately experience intimate partner violence,” as

well as higher rates of drug use as compared with “cisgender heterosexual youth.”

A study by seven experts published a study in 2020 in the American Journal of Public Health on this subject and found that “Transgender individuals experience dramatically higher prevalence of IPV victimization compared with cisgender individuals, regardless of sex assigned at birth.” In fact, “Transgender people are 1.7 times more likely to experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime compared to cisgender people,” and are “2.2 times more likely to experience physical IPV.” Worse, “Sexual intimate partner violence is even more prevalent, as trans people experience it about 2.5 times more than cis people.”

The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence reviewed the literature on domestic violence in the LGBT community, and in 2018 it published its results. It found that the prevalence of IPV was comparatively higher for this community than it is among heterosexuals who accept their status as a male or female. Regarding trans persons, the situation is worse. They suffer “an even greater burden of intimate partner violence than gay or lesbian individuals.”

The Portland Monthly did a story on this issue in 2020, and after consulting the work of several experts, it concluded that “statistically speaking, the most common perpetrators of violence against trans women are domestic partners.”

In 2021, another study by the Williams Institute concluded that “Transgender people are over four times more likely than cisgender people to experience violent victimization, including rape, sexual assault, and aggravated or simple assault.”

In 2023, four authors of a study on IPV among transgender and gender diverse people found that “between 42 and 62 percent” of them experience some type of IPV. The prevalence of IPV is

considerably higher with this sector of the population than it is with others.

The Biden administration appears to be oblivious to these alarming statistics. Indeed, whenever it addresses violence in the trans community, it leads the public to think that it is those who are not part of this group—which means everyone else—are responsible for the violence against them.

The raw truth of the matter is that trans persons who are intimately involved with their partner are victimizing each other. It is not frat boys roaming the streets of trans neighborhoods who are committing the violence against trans persons—they are doing it to themselves.

Those in government, the health profession, education, and the media are not telling the public the truth. Indeed, they are involved in a cover-up; their deceit is appalling.

If the Biden administration is truly interested in the safety and wellbeing of trans children in foster care homes, it should be wary of placing them in settings where the parents are trans adults.

BIDEN, TRANS KIDS AND FOSTER PARENTS

Bill Donohue

The Biden administration is seeking to limit the rights of foster parents who currently care for LGBT children. It also wants to limit the rights of all future foster parents, making sure they respect the wants and desires of adopted children

who may elect to switch their sex.

The public has until November 27 to respond to the proposal by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Information will be provided at the end of this article.

Before examining the proposal, we need to understand what is driving this issue. It's not hard to figure out.

No queer organization has been more prominent in affecting policy in this administration than the Human Rights Campaign (HRC).

Lavishly funded by the corporate world, it was ready to hit the ground running if Biden won the presidential election. On November 11, 2020, eight days after he won, it rolled out its 22-page "Blueprint for Positive Change." It detailed a list of policy recommendations for the administration to follow.

HRC officials have not been disappointed. On June 8, 2023, they issued a press release applauding the administration for its "continued support." They had previously decided, in 2019, that "Adoption is a Trans Issue."

The proposed policy, which appeared in the "Federal Register" on September 28, makes it clear that foster parents of trans children do not call the shots—the kids do. And by kids, we mean those who are fourteen years of age; in some cases, even children under fourteen can overrule their foster parents.

For example, what if the child of foster parents decides she is unhappy being a girl and wants to identify as a boy (80 percent of the time it's the girl who wants to transition), and the parents object. According to this proposal, the foster parents are "expected to utilize the child's identified pronouns, chosen name, and allow the child to dress in an age-appropriate manner that the child believes reflects their self-identified gender identity and expression." In other words, the state is eclipsing the rights of parents.

What if the child of foster parents wants to finish the job, accessing “Clinically appropriate services” based on “accepted medical standards of care”? In other words, submitting to irreversible puberty blockers and chemical castration. Can the parents overrule their child? Not on your life.

Ordinarily, as even HHS admits, the age that most states say is the legal age of adulthood is eighteen. There are rare instances, such as consenting to certain medical treatments, where a child of sixteen is permitted to consent. But fourteen and below? This is novel, and precarious, territory.

Worse, the issue is not overruling one’s parents in electing to take aspirin—we are talking about physically altering a young person for the rest of his or her life, changes that also have dramatic psychological effects.

When they talk about “Clinically appropriate services” based on “accepted medical standards of care,” they are talking about “age appropriate services that support their [the child’s] needs related to their sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.” That obviously includes sex-reassignment surgery.

The term “age-appropriate” is used in this section of the proposal on p. 66760, but it is not specific. The first time this term is used is on p. 66757. It is never defined. But we do know that fourteen-year-olds can override their parents counsel, and if there are some serious problems at home (e.g., the child was removed due to familial conflict), even those who are younger than fourteen can overrule their parents. This is unprecedented in Western law.

What if the foster parents of a young girl who identifies as a boy refuse to accommodate her? Can the government take the child away from them? You bet. It says that “LGBTQI+ children can be transferred from any entity that will not provide a safe and appropriate placement,” as described in the proposal.

It defines as unsafe attempts by the parents to dissuade the child from transitioning.

What if the parents object to their child's transitioning plans on religious grounds? Too bad. The proposal ostensibly recognizes the validity of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), which protects religious liberty, but nonetheless concludes that no religious exemption should be afforded if the burden on the religious rights of parents "is necessary to the advancement of a compelling government interest through the least restrictive means possible." Thus does the proposal stand RFRA on its head—it's the government that has to have a compelling interest to override religious liberty!

Of course, the proposal says that allowing sexually confused kids to transition to the opposite sex meets this test. In other words, it is not a "compelling government interest" to defend parental rights, and this extends even to parents who have sincerely held religious convictions. To be exact, this proposal undermines parental rights and eviscerates RFRA.

Tomorrow, I will take up the issue of allowing trans adults to adopt children. But in the meantime, please register your objections to this proposal by emailing your response to the address below.

CBComments@acf.hhs.gov Be sure to put the Regulatory Information Number (RIN) in the subject line: RIN 0970-AD03.

LOOK WHO'S BASHING COLUMBUS

[Bill Donohue](#)

We live in a time when some politicians think it is perfectly

acceptable to allow a baby who survives a botched abortion to die unattended by medical staff. All across the nation, child abuse in the schools is rampant—we are telling young kids they can switch their sex as quickly as they can turn on a light switch, offering puberty blockers and chemical castration to get the job done. Moreover, they can do so behind the backs of their parents, with the approval of the National Education Association.

We have just come off a respiratory illness that killed over one million Americans and yet we are now legalizing marijuana—while continuing an “anti-cigarette” campaign in the schools. Students are now coming to school stoned. We are allowing, even enabling, people from other countries to crash our borders, bringing untold amounts of fentanyl with them.

Our cities are run by politicians who rescue cats and dogs from extremely cold weather while allowing mentally deranged human beings to freeze to death on the sidewalks, all in the name of civil liberties. Crime is out of control and there is no accountability for even violent crimes. The homeless defecate in the streets, harass passersby, and demand that their “rights” be protected.

And these same politicians—*all of whom are liberal Democrats*—have the audacity to pretend that they come to the table with their hands clean, insisting we either erase Columbus from history or demonize him, all the while romanticizing so-called indigenous peoples. It’s enough to make any sane American who knows anything about history reach for the vomit bag.

Native Americans did not originate in America: they migrated here from Asia. The idea that they lived in some kind of Garden of Eden—living peacefully—until the white boys showed up is pure poppycock. The fact is there is nothing noble about the “noble savage.” Indeed, he is more savage than noble.

Harvard professor Steven Pinker, who is not a victim of political correctness, describes what life was like throughout most of history.

“Cruelty as entertainment, human sacrifice to indulge superstition, slavery as a labor-saving device, conquest as the mission statement of government, genocide as a means of acquiring real estate, torture and mutilation as routine punishment, the death penalty for misdemeanors and differences of opinion, assassination as the mechanism of political succession, rape as the spoils of war, pogroms as outlets for frustration, homicide as the major form of conflict resolution—all were unexceptionable features of life for most of human history.”

What about indigenous peoples? Pinker concludes that they “were far more violent than our own.” He cites the work of noted anthropologists who learned of “population-wide rates of death in tribal warfare that dwarf those of modern times.” Bernard Bailyn, the famous Harvard historian agreed, saying, they did not live in a “terribly peaceful world.” In fact, “They were always involved in warfare.”

None of this is to excuse any wrongdoing by Europeans—many of them were just as vicious. But it is to say that we need to get over our childlike image of Native Americans and stop with the Columbus bashing. It makes no sense morally or historically, and this is doubly so for those who come to the table today with filthy hands.

CLARITY SHOULD BE THE SYNOD’S

GOAL

Bill Donohue

The average Catholic in the pew has no idea what a synod is, never mind a Synod on Synodality, and they would be astonished to learn that this event is going on right now in Rome. If they were to read about it, they would likely concur with Pope Francis' fear that it might be seen as "something abstruse, self-referential, excessively technical, of little interest to the general public." Those fears are real.

For many of those members of the laity who are following this event, the synod is a source of great confusion. Five cardinals asked the pope over the summer to clarify some issues—asking him to answer a set of questions—are among those frustrated with current conditions. In July, the pope did not offer a "yes" or "no" answer to their concerns, preferring instead to offer a more nuanced response.

What the pope said in his reply to five central issues has not changed matters. After he begins his response with a straightforward summary of Church teachings, he uses words and terms such as "but," "while it is true," "yet," "however," and "on the other hand." If it is true that what matters comes after the "but," then the lack of clarity persists.

To take one example, most Catholics who follow the kinds of issues addressed by the cardinals believe that St. John Paul II "definitively" affirmed the impossibility of women priests. Indeed, the pope says just that in his reply. Then he undoes it. "On the other hand...a clear and authoritative doctrine has not yet been exhaustively developed about the exact nature of a 'definitive statement.' It is not a dogmatic definition, and yet it must be observed by all."

So the ordination of women has been "definitively" decided, but what is definitive is not an "authoritative doctrine," yet

it “must be observed by all.” What’s that?

Then there is the issue of confession. Catholics have been told that in order to receive absolution for their sins, they must first repent. But the pope apparently rejects the explicit wording of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. He told seminarians in Barcelona, Spain that “we must forgive all.” In denying absolution to someone who is unrepentant, he said, “we become a vehicle for an evil, unjust, and moralist judgment.” Such priests, he added, are “delinquents.” [He then reportedly dropped the F-word in describing these priests.](#)

Instances like this are what provoked the five cardinals to ask whether “forgiveness is a human right.” The pope began his reply by repeating what the *Catechism* says, but then said that if the penitent has a “very wounded self-esteem, pleading guilty is a cruel torture.” He also said that the conditions that are generally applicable to confession do not apply if the person “is in a situation of agony.”

It is qualifications such as these that create confusion.

Clarity is important when it comes to rules governing professional sports. It is much more important when it comes to the teachings of the Catholic Church. If the Synod on Synodality ends a year from now having muddied Church teachings, it will “definitively” be declared a failure by millions of the faithful.

ORTHODOXY, NOT HETERODOXY,

WORKS

The Synod on Synodality begins in Rome on October 4. To that end, we thought it would be fruitful to examine the data on orthodoxy v. heterodoxy within the Catholic Church. For a longer version, click [here](#).

Mass Attendance Globally

The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) has found that major discrepancies exist on Mass attendance in different nations. Nations that score high on orthodoxy do a better job than those that are less orthodox.

Nigeria

Despite terrorist attacks, the Catholic Church in Nigeria remains strong. While approximately 20 million people (roughly 13 percent of the population) are Catholic, church attendance among Catholics in Nigeria is 94 percent. This is the highest rate of Mass attendance in the world. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria is noted for its adherence to Catholic orthodoxy, and the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter, a more traditional Catholic society, flourishes in the African nation, as well.

Germany

Though it enjoys a strong financial base—the Catholic Church in Germany is generously subsidized by the taxpayers—it has been in rapid decline. While CARA averages Mass attendance for German Catholics between 2017 to 2022 to be approximately 14 percent, local statistics indicate that in 2022 only 5.7 percent of Catholics were weekly in the pews.

In 2019, the Central Committee of German Catholics and the German bishops' conference began a collaborative effort known as "The Synodal Way." This provided a forum for activists with

more heterodox views to promote making substantive changes to Church teachings. Throughout the process the heterodox advocates dominated the proceedings and called for more and more significant departures from Catholic traditions.

Ultimately, when the process concluded in March of 2023, “The Synodal Way” overwhelmingly endorsed measures changing Catholic practices on transgender ideology, accepting the ordination of women to the sacramental diaconate, approving the blessing of same-sex relationships, normalizing lay preaching, and asking Rome to reexamine the discipline of priestly celibacy.

Brazil

Following Vatican II, Latin America became a hotbed for liberation theology. As its name would suggest, liberation theology is a Christian theological approach emphasizing the liberation of the oppressed and downtrodden.

In practice, though, liberation theology replaces Catholic orthodoxy with strong Marxist overtones. As Friar Clodovis Boff, brother of renowned liberation theologian and former Catholic priest Leonardo Boff, warns in his new book, *The Crisis in the Catholic Church and Liberation Theology*, that adherents to this heterodoxy fall “into utilitarianism or functionalism in relation to the Word of God and to theology in general.” In other words, political and socio-economic concerns trump spiritual ones under a liberation theology interpretation.

After several decades of liberation theology, Catholic Brazilians now count for 51 percent of the total population. Further, less than one in ten (eight percent) of Brazil’s Catholics attend Mass weekly. This is one of the lowest levels of Mass attendance in the world.

American Seminaries

As a general rule, the more orthodox an institution is the more seminarians it attracts. Conversely, the more heterodox an institution has become the fewer candidates for the priesthood will attend.

For instance, the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University and the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry are two prominent seminaries that are more heterodox in their nature. Respectively, in the 2022-2023 academic year, their enrollments were 34 and 32 seminarians. Out of all 39 seminaries in the country, these are the 29th and 30th highest attended.

However, more orthodox seminaries attract significantly more seminarians. Institutions such as Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Maryland, Notre Dame Seminary in Louisiana, St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Colorado, St. Vincent de Paul Seminary in Florida, and St. Meinrad School of Theology in Indiana are all orthodox and in the 2022-2023 academic year all had over 100 seminarians in attendance.

Sisters of Charity

Founded by St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in New York City, the Sisters of Charity were once a prominent order of nuns that worked to help the poor and promote the Catholic faith. However, over the last two centuries, the Sisters of Charity began to embrace heterodoxy.

Ultimately, this led to their numbers dwindling. According to the current congregation president Sister Donna Dodge, "in 21 years, no one entered and stayed." The median age of the sisters today is 83 years old, and there are 154 members left in the community. Demographic statistics indicate that they may have approximately 35 members left in the next 15 years. As a result, in April of 2023, the Sisters of Charity voted to stop accepting new members and embark on a "path to completion" of their mission.

Several traditional orders of nuns have thrived while maintaining Catholic orthodoxy. For instance, the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist was founded in 1997. Yet in just over a quarter of a century, these more traditional sisters have grown to 150 members with an average age of 35 and the average age of women joining the order is 21. Similarly, the Franciscan Sisters of Renewal and the Sisters of Life, founded in 1988 and 1991, respectively, continue to grow and thrive attracting new, younger members while remaining steadfast in upholding the orthodoxy of the Catholic Church.