

# CLEVELAND DIOCESE ISSUES MODEL LGBT POLICY

[Bill Donohue](#)

The Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, under the leadership of Bishop Edward C. Malesic, has issued a policy for Catholic parishes and schools on sexuality and gender identity that is a model for all Catholic entities, nationwide. Predictably, LGBT activists and their supporters in the media and politics are unhappy, and some are seriously misrepresenting the policy.

In explaining his position, Bishop Malesic restated Church teachings on this matter. “The human person,” he said, “created in the image and likeness of God, deserves the utmost respect, for each person’s dignity is inherent and inviolable.” This set the tone for his policy.

Contrary to what some are saying, the policy does not forbid students who suffer from gender dysphoria—or confusion about their biological sex—from attending Catholic schools. None will be denied. But what will not be tolerated are public denunciations of Church teachings on sexuality. This would include strictures on homosexuality and gender identity. In other words, everyone is welcome to attend Catholic schools, but no one is allowed to publicly resist what the Church teaches.

Policy specifics include notifying parents if their child is experiencing gender dysphoria. Correct pronouns—those which reflect the biological sex of the student—must be used to describe students. Boys’ bathrooms are for boys, not girls, and vice versa. Sports competition allows only biological girls to compete against girls, not boys who think they are girls.

School functions, such as dances, must respect the biological differences between the sexes. Personal appearances and attire should also reflect these differences. No one may undergo sex-reassignment surgery. And all school records will mirror the biological sex of the student.

None of this should be considered controversial, but in some quarters it is.

Benjamin Huelkamp is an LGBT activist who maintains that “the majority of American Catholics are actually supportive of the LGBTQ community.” Wrong. They are not.

A Pew Research Center survey of Christians last year found that Catholics are considerably more likely to say that “society has become too accepting of transgender people” now than they were in 2017. A plurality of Catholics support requiring students to use the public bathrooms of their biological sex, and a plurality want to make it illegal to teach gender ideology in the schools. Six-in-ten want biological boys and girls to compete against those of their own sex, and not against each other. Almost two-in-three oppose adding new gender options to government documents.

The LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland issued a statement saying the Cleveland diocese’s policy used “harmful rhetoric towards the LGBTQ+ community.” This is a lie. It cited not one example.

Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb said that “the new policy forces LGBTQ+ kids to hide their authentic selves and attend school in fear of persecution of who they are.” This is also a lie. It should also be noted that the “authentic selves” of students is their biological sex, not some socially contrived notion of who they think they are.

We are delighted that Bishop Malesic is not shying away from this issue. By issuing a clear and specific policy on sexuality and gender identity he is doing Catholics in the

Cleveland community a favor. Indeed, he is doing Catholics everywhere a favor.

Show your support for the bishop.

Contact his communications director, Nancy Fishburn:  
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## LOOKING FOR DIRT IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

If you look hard enough to find dirt, you will probably succeed. We are all sinners. A more interesting issue is why some people and institutions are the constant targets of dirt digging while others get a pass. The latest example is an article published in the September 11 edition of *The Week* magazine.

Devika Rao's article, "The Catholic Church's Latest Scandals in the US," is inaccurate: the latest scandals are mostly old. Of the six stories dealing with sexual abuse, two go back to World War II, one is from a half-century ago, and the others are random acts of a few people. The author, whose specialty is the environment and climate control, never explains why she decided to do this piece, nor does she draw any conclusions. She is content to simply recycle old stories.

Rao obviously has no interest in looking for fresh dirt in the public schools. If she had, she would report that from 2017 to 2018, there were approximately 15,000 incidents of reported rape or attempted rape in the public schools. For the same time period, there were over 14,000 reports of sexual assault other than rape.

Moreover, consider the number of complaints filed by the Defense of Freedom Institute (DFI), between 2010 and 2019, alleging instances of sexual violence against K-12 schools: they more than tripled. DFI, as reported in *City Journal*, found that when public school employees are investigated for sexual abuse, “many school districts are under no legal obligation to notify parents or even note the investigation in the employee’s personnel file.” Also, under collective bargaining agreements, they “often allow for scrubbing of personnel files.”

As I recount in [\*The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes\*](#), sexual misconduct exists in every institution, secular and religious. Yet the media do not report on this with any degree of regularity, save for the Catholic Church.

Here’s some data about the Catholic clergy that Ms. Rao missed. 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. In the first half of 2022, the number of allegation—*not allegations that have been substantiated*—was zero.

If Rao knows of any institution which has a better record than this, she ought to write about it. It would be breaking news.

The reason the media do not report on this, preferring to rehash old dirt, is precisely to poison the public mind. They want to give the appearance that nothing has changed. What certainly hasn’t changed is the anti-Catholic bias that permeates a large swath of the media.

Contact the senior editor at *The Week*, Peter Weber: [Peter\\_Weber@theweek.com](mailto:Peter_Weber@theweek.com)

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# WAS THE CHURCH “SILENT” DURING THE HOLOCAUST?

The day after it was reported that new documents were found showing that the Catholic Church saved over 3,000 Jews during the Nazi occupation of Rome, the *New York Times* ran an article on this story noting that during this time Pope Pius XII “remained publicly silent.”

In other words, we are to believe that all those Jews who were saved by priests, nuns and lay people—which even the *Times* admits were in the “tens of thousands”—did so without ever heeding instructions from the Vatican. This is a remarkable conclusion: The “hyper-centralized” and “highly hierarchal” Vatican sat by idly without ever giving marching orders to the faithful. I guess they were just nice Catholic boys and girls.

But as I pointed out [yesterday](#), that is contradicted by the world’s foremost Holocaust scholar, Sir Martin Gilbert. His assessment led him to conclude that Catholics who sheltered Jews did so “on his [the pope’s] direct authority.”

If the pope was silent, then how could the *New York Times* have concluded at that time that he was *not silent*!

Here is what a *New York Times* editorial said on Christmas Day, 1941: “The voice of Pius XII is a lonely voice in the silence and darkness enveloping Europe this Christmas.”

Here is what a *New York Times* editorial said on Christmas Day, 1942: “This Christmas more than ever he [the pope] is a lonely voice crying out of the silence of a continent.”

Now how can it be that those closest to the events at that

time, such as the editorial board of the *New York Times* in the early 1940s, were wrong, and today's reporters for the newspaper are right?

To be sure, the pope was not screaming from the rooftops in public about Hitler. He was indeed concerned about antagonizing him. So were Jews at that time.

In 1942, Gerhard Riegner of the World Jewish Congress notified his colleagues in London and New York of an "alarming report" about plans to exterminate Jews. And what did they do? They failed to lobby on behalf of a bill by Rep. Emanuel Celler that would have eased restrictions on Jews emigrating from France to the United States.

This came after Kristallnacht, November 9-10, 1938, the "Night of Broken Glass," when the American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, B'nai B'rith, and the Jewish Labor Committee concluded that the best course of action was to do nothing. They said, "at least for the time being, nothing should be done." In addition, all of these Jewish organizations went on record saying that "there should be no parades, demonstrations, or protests by Jews."

When it was reported in 1942 that two million Jews had been killed in the Nazi extermination campaign, the *New York Times* placed the story on page ten surrounded by ads for Thanksgiving Day turkeys.

In 1943, Hitler's biographer, John Toland, said, "The Church, under the Pope's guidance, had already saved the lives of more Jews than all other churches, religious institutions, and rescue organizations combined, and was presently hiding thousands of Jews in monasteries, convents, and Vatican City itself."

[Note: All of the above information, and much more, can be found in my book, [\*Why Catholicism Matters\*](#), published by Image (Random House) in 2012; citations are provided for everything

I said.]

Attempts to belittle the role of the Catholic Church during the Holocaust has long been a cottage industry. But with the release of more and more documents from the Vatican archives, it looks like the Church's worst critics are on the losing side of this argument.

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## **NEW INFO SHOWS ROME SAVED JEWS FROM NAZIS**

**Bill Donohue**

On September 7, new documentation found at the Pontifical Biblical Institute was unveiled at the Shoah Museum in Rome. The evidence shows that during the Nazi occupation in Rome, from September 1943 to June 1944, 100 women's religious orders and 55 men's religious congregations were responsible for sheltering more than 4,300 persons. Of that number, 3,600 have been identified by name, and 3,200 of them have been "conclusively identified as Jews."

Many students of this ugly chapter in history are not shocked by the latest batch of documents (there is more to come). It is incontestable that thousands of Jews were hidden from the Nazis in many of the Church's venues. Israeli diplomat and historian Pinchas Lapide estimated that, overall, the Catholic Church saved between 700,000 and 860,000 Jews. No other religion came close to matching this figure.

Despite this noble record, fair-minded scholars, such as University of Mississippi law professor Ronald Rychlak, have long argued that the Catholic Church has not gotten its due for the yeoman work it did during the Holocaust.

Sir Martin Gilbert, perhaps the foremost historian of the Holocaust, noted that Catholics were among the very first victims of the Nazis and that the Church responded by taking a tough stance against Hitler. The role of Pope Pius XII, he said, can best be assessed by what he did when the Gestapo entered Rome in 1943 to round up Jews. Gilbert wrote that "on his direct authority, [the Catholic Church] immediately dispersed as many Jews as they could."

Gilbert and I corresponded on this issue, and in 2001 he shared with me something I have never published before now.

After the *New York Times* praised Pius XII in 1942, the Reich Central Security Office was furious. "In a manner never known before," the Nazis said, "the Pope has repudiated the National Socialist New European Order... Here he is virtually accusing the German people of injustice towards the Jews and makes himself the mouthpiece of the Jewish war criminals."

So much for the canard that Pius XII was "Hitler's Pope." Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, Hitler had plans to assassinate the pope.

Even before this time, it was clear that the Catholic Church was doing what it could—without further angering the Nazis—to help Jews. In 1940, Albert Einstein said, "Only the Church stood squarely across the path of Hitler's campaign for suppressing the truth." Subsequently, *Time* magazine and the *New York Times* also trumpeted the heroics of the Church.

Speaking of the *New York Times*, what exactly did it have to say about the Holocaust?

It ran only nine editorials criticizing the Nazis in the years



1941, 1942, and 1943 (three each year). Moreover, when the Nazis arrested a cousin of Arthur Sulzberger, the *Times* chief instructed his Berlin bureau chief to do “nothing.” Sulzberger said he didn’t want to antagonize the Nazis. The cousin, Louis Zinn, was so despondent that after he left prison he hanged himself.

Catholic-Jewish relations are strong today, and we can all be glad that resistance to religious persecution is a widely shared goal in the 21st century. The Holocaust may be unique, but hostility to religious liberty is increasing, both at home and abroad. Vigilance is always in order.

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## CANADIAN “MASS GRAVE” STORY A HOAX?

[Bill Donohue](#)

In 2014, I wrote a [monograph](#), *Ireland’s “Mass Grave” Hysteria*, on claims that 800 bodies of children were found in a mass grave outside a former home run by nuns in Tuam, near Galway. It was all a hoax, just as I had suspected. There was no mass grave. The result: It made the anti-Catholic activists and journalists look like fools.

Two years ago, the Canadian government claimed that Indian children were buried in “mass graves” at residential schools established by the government and run, in part, by the Catholic Church. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau sounded the alarms and ordered the nation’s flags to be flown at half mast; he pledged to spend \$40 billion to settle with those associated with the alleged victims.

Looks like Trudeau, and all the critics of the Catholic Church, were fooled. It is becoming increasingly apparent that this story is also a hoax. After 14 sites were excavated recently, not one mass grave has been found. Indeed, the body count is zero.

This story began in 2021 after claims about unmarked graves emerged. Immediately, pundits and activists speculated that the Catholic Church (which did not run the majority of the schools) was to blame for the deaths of thousands of indigenous children. Murray Sinclair, who was chosen to chair the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, opined that the number of corpses was in the range of 15,000-25,000. Now the attorney and member of the Peguis First Nation can't find even one.

When the Report was issued last year, it did not make claims about mass graves. Instead, it focused on the "cultural genocide" that the indigenous children experienced. After reading the Report, on August 2, 2022, I titled my assessment, "The Genocide That Wasn't."

No sooner had the charge of "cultural genocide" been bandied about when it was shortened by Catholic critics to "genocide." On p. 6 of the Report, it noted that "Despite the coercive measures that the government adopted, it failed to achieve its policy goals. Although Aboriginal peoples and cultures have been damaged, they continue to exist." So much for the "cultural genocide" thesis—never mind the more serious charge of genocide.

Was there no violence at these residential schools?

In the 535-page Report, there were exactly two testimonials about killing. One was made by an indigenous woman who said she witnessed her older brother kill one of her other brothers when she was nine. The other was in reference to a killing that took place between 1980 and 2012. The residential schools

were closed in 1969.

If the residential schools were guilty of genocide, surely the Report would have found instances of torture, if not whipping. I looked in vain to find such incidents. Oh, yes, there was one instance of whipping: it was committed by a government teacher in 1895.

Were the Catholic-run schools free of wrongdoing? Pretty much.

On p. 68 of the Report it says the missionaries opposed integrating the indigenous children into the public schools, but not for nefarious reasons. They did so because "1) teachers in public schools were not prepared to deal with Aboriginal students; 2) students in the public schools often expressed racist attitudes towards Aboriginal students; and 3) Aboriginal students felt acute embarrassment over their impoverished conditions, particularly in terms of the quality of the clothing they wore and the food they ate."

None of this was highlighted by the media, nor by Trudeau's government.

Mass graves. Genocide. We saw those words thrown about with alacrity in Ireland a decade ago, and more recently in Canada. These false charges have stoked anti-Catholic sentiment in Ireland and have led to the burning of scores of Catholic churches in Canada. The consequences of bigotry can be severe, especially when promoted by the secular-minded members of the ruling class.

*Contact Murray Sinclair at his Manitoba law firm and tell him you agree that Canada needs a day of reconciliation over this story, a day to reconcile with Catholics, that is:*  
[msinclair@cochranesaxberg.com](mailto:msinclair@cochranesaxberg.com)

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# WHY LeBRON JAMES' SCHOOL FAILED

[Bill Donohue](#)

He meant well. Basketball superstar LeBron James wanted to create a school for struggling minority students in his home town of Akron, Ohio that would be a model of excellence. It turned out to be a failure. The question is why.

Inadequate funding. Systemic racism. These factors are constantly being blamed for the poor academic performance of black Americans. James' school made sure those problems would not haunt his students, and he did a great job in keeping his promise. But he still failed.

James' I Promise School opened in the summer of 2018. The school, which targets at-risk students, is a joint effort between the LeBron James Family Foundation and Akron Public Schools; it receives considerably more money than the typical public school. It serves grades three through eight.

The array of resources the school has is stunning. Tuition is free, as are uniforms. Every student is given a free bicycle and helmet, as well as free transportation within two miles of the school. Breakfast, lunch and snacks are free. Counselors are readily available. When students graduate, they receive free tuition at the University of Akron.

Parents are afforded free GED classes and job placement; financial-literacy tutorials are available. There is a food pantry, and parents can design meals at the on-site food bank or cook at home. Free child care is provided. There is a barbershop and hair salon.

Teachers, as well as students, are afforded technology-free zones “for decompression.” Yoga classes are available. There are personal training sessions for teachers. Career development is provided, and there are psychological services for teachers.

The emphasis is on providing a well-rounded environment that meets the needs of students, teachers and parents. When students arrive, they are greeted with hugs and high-fives from the staff, occasionally dancing to Sister Sledge’s “We Are Family.”

When the school opened, Akron Public Schools posted on its website that it wants to be the “#1 urban school system in the United States.” A year later, the principal, Brandi Davis, said, “We are reigniting dreams that were extinguished—already in the third and fourth grade. We want to change the face of urban education.” In 2021, the fourth grade teacher said, “I think we really could start a revolution in public schools.”

There was reason for optimism. After its first year, 90 percent of the students met or exceeded individual growth goals in reading and math; this was better than what students did across the district. But this didn’t last long.

In 2023, it was reported that it’s been three years since the school’s eighth grade students achieved passing scores in math. The most recent data show that not one eighth grader passed the state’s math test. Only 8.2 percent of seventh graders were deemed proficient in English language arts, which was better than they did in math where there was a 1 percent proficiency rate.

None of the sixth grade students were proficient in math. For fifth graders, the figure was 1 percent. Only 9.9 percent of fourth graders hit the mark; for third graders, 11.5 percent met the math standard.

Why is the school not meeting expectations? It can’t be

money—they are awash in it. Perhaps the answer lies more in the way students are treated. Those who run the school have opted for what can only be called the therapeutic approach to education.

“It’s almost like when you grow up in the inner city or your grow up in the projects, no one cares for you,” James said two years ago. “The goal and mission of the school is for the kids to feel like they’re superheroes.” But if “superheroes” can’t read or do basic math, should they be encouraged to feel good about themselves?

The principal says the goal is about “true wrap-around support, true family integration and true compassion.” To that end, the school provides opportunities for students to “regulate their emotions, develop self-awareness, and cooperate with others.” As an official at James’ foundation put it, students need “a lot of love and care.” The principal agrees, saying the goal is to “teach students how to love.”

Only a heartless scold would say students don’t need to be loved. But what happens when they act up? Should they be held accountable or should they be given another hug?

A sympathetic piece in *Education Week* noticed “skirmishes out in the playground [and] outbursts in the classroom.” To deal with these issues, they have role-playing exercises where students snap at teachers, accusing them of being “too aggressive.” After the incident, both engage in laughter.

Safety is a problem. Some parents have requested to have their children transfer out because of it. Teacher turnover is at a serious level. And despite the “loving” environment, almost half the students are chronically absent.

A school that only emphasizes discipline is not going to ensure academic success. But a school that deemphasizes accountability, favoring a therapeutic approach, is also going to fail.

James graduated from St. Mary-St.Vincent High School, not far from his school. It is a smashing success. He ought to find out why.