

REPORT ON ANTI-CHRISTIAN BIAS NAILS IT

[Bill Donohue](#)

The report by the Trump administration's Task Force on Anti-Christian Bias is commendable. It lays out, in great detail, the extent to which Christians have had their First Amendment rights violated by the Biden administration, as well as by some states.

None of this is news to the Catholic League—we provided a trove of documents to the Task Force and I personally met with one of the top lawyers working in the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice (DOJ)—but it is important that the public learn just how malicious the Biden administration was in its treatment of Christians.

The report correctly notes that there was a different worldview between that of Christians and that of the operatives in the Biden administration. But that was true when President Obama was in office, yet he did not brand Catholics who opposed abortion, gay marriage and sex-reassignment surgery as “domestic terrorists.” That is not a small difference.

The Biden DOJ was not content to see its policies prevail; rather, it was driven by a desire to *punish* Christians with whom they disagreed with. Here are ten examples.

- When dossiers are prepared on pro-life Christians, and information is collected on their children, that is nefarious.
- When a judge is labeled a “very Catholic magistrate,” that is treacherous.
- When a Christian nurse is forced to participate in an abortion, that is malicious.

- When a Christian family is told it cannot be foster parents because they disagree with gender ideology, that is wicked.
- When Catholics are restricted from going to Mass because of unproven, and unevenly applied, restrictions due to a health scare, that is indefensible.
- When pro-life protesters are treated as if they were violent thugs, that is despicable.
- When gay pride flags are flown at the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See, that is unconscionable.
- When Christians' parental rights are violated by educators, that is reprehensible.
- When pro-life students are told to remove their religious symbols when they enter a federal building, that is outrageous.
- When the religious rights of Christians are put on the chopping block by secular zealots, that is pernicious.

The Biden administration targeted Christians in a way that is unprecedented. That Biden called himself a "devout Catholic" makes his machinations all the more astounding.

While this is bad enough, the disinterest in reporting on this by the mainstream media is more than distressing—it is totally irresponsible. If it were some other demographic group that was being profiled by the federal government—one of the protected classes—all hell would break loose.

The Task Force did its job. But our job at the Catholic League is not over. When vigilance atrophies, so do our rights. It's not in our DNA to let that happen.

MAMDANI'S QUEST TO RAPE THE RICH

[Bill Donohue](#)

Besides an insatiable appetite for control, what defines the Left is an equally insatiable appetite for envy. No one epitomizes these vices today better than New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani, a young Muslim man born to privilege who has never had a real job.

He recently stuck his face into a camera and said, "When I ran for mayor, I said I was going to tax the rich. Well, today we're taxing the rich." He had his proverbial snarky grin on his face, delighted with his decision to fleece the upper class. If he had any integrity, he would include himself and his parents in his rape-the-rich game.

Mamdani has made it plain that he supports the "abolition of private property." Or as he likes to put it, "If there was any system that could guarantee each person housing—whether you call it the abolition of private property or you call it a statewide housing guarantee—it is preferable to what is going on right now."

Calls for the "abolition of private property" are what made Karl Marx famous. It is a basic tenet of communism. Now if Mamdani were honest, he would have to rid himself of his private property holdings, and those of his uber-rich parents. They all sing from the same communist playbook, but in real life they are capitalists par excellence.

Mamdani loves private property so much that he owns four acres of land in Jinja, Uganda. It is worth an estimated \$250,000. Not bad for a plot of land with nothing on it (at least for the moment). As one Ugandan told a reporter, "One thing for sure is that Zohran owns not only one land here, but many." He

may not be required to report private property holdings that do not generate income, so he can skirt scrutiny. This is the kind of capitalist trick that if done by others would drive him mad.

The working class can barely afford to pay for one wedding, but Mamdani had no problem paying for three of them. The biggest one was in Uganda. He made sure to keep the riff-raff far away. He hired heavily armed men and masked special forces to guard his family's estate, making ICE agents look angelic.

Mommy and daddy are filthy rich. Mira Nair is an international filmmaker and Mahmood Mamdani is a Columbia University professor. He makes \$300,000 a year, which is not exactly chump change, especially for a Marxist. She is worth an estimated \$5 million. She sold her Manhattan apartment in 2019 for \$1.45 million.

Family holdings in Uganda are extensive, going beyond Jinja. Their prize possession is a luxury 5-bedroom villa on two acres of land. It has a pool, gardens and a spectacular view of Lake Victoria. It is worth more than 1 million dollars.

Despite all his loot, Mamdani wants to rape the rich. He is not driven by justice—he is driven by envy. Envy is not identical to jealousy. The jealous want what others have; the envious want to deprive others of what they have. That defines Mamdani.

The Catholic Church considers envy to be one of the seven capital sins. Robert Nisbet, the great American sociologist, got it right when he said, "Of the seven deadly sins, of all states of the human mind indeed, envy is the basest and ugliest. It is also the most corrosive of spiritual and moral fiber in the bearer and the most destructive of the social fabric."

It is bad enough that Mamdani stokes the flames of envy, but what makes him even more detestable is his rank hypocrisy.

Pope Francis did not know him, but he knew of his ilk. “Hypocrites are people who pretend, flatter and deceive because they live with a mask over their faces and do not have the courage to face the truth.”

Mamdani doesn't have the courage to tell the truth about his enormous wealth. Instead, he pretends to be one of the masses. But he never was and he never will be. He is a nepo-baby foreign investor who is not subject to the consequences of his own economic policies. “Do as I say, not as I do” never sounded more obscene.

IS SHARIA A FRIEND OR FOE OF LIBERTY?

[Bill Donohue](#)

Sharia is the law that is derived from Islamic texts and traditions. Whether it is more of a friend or foe of liberty is disputed, but both sides can't be right.

On March 20, the *New York Times* ran an editorial taking aim at President Trump's “Islamophobia.” Without assessing its merits, what interests the Catholic League is whether its interpretation of Sharia is correct. It defines it as “a set of principles, based on the Quran, that guide life for Muslims, much as biblical precepts guide Christians and Jews.” “Extreme versions” exist, it allows, “including Afghanistan and Iran.”

Agreeing with the *Times* is the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the Muslim civil rights organization.

Sharia, it says, “plays the same role in Islam that canon law plays for Catholics and halacha plays for Jews, a voluntary moral compass, not an alternative legal code.” It goes on to say that “Like other faith communities in the US and elsewhere, we see no inherent conflict between normative values of Islam and the US Constitution and Bill of Rights.”

A week prior to the *Times* editorial, Rep. Mike Johnson, Speaker of the House, expressed his concern about those who “come to a country and not assimilate but to impose Sharia law.” The problem there, he notes, is that “Sharia law is in conflict with the Constitution.”

Agreeing with Johnson is the European Court of Human Rights.

In 2003, the Grand Chamber ruled that “It is difficult to declare one’s respect for democracy and human rights while at the same time supporting a regime based on sharia, which clearly diverges from Convention values...” Similarly, according to Islamic scholar Robert Spencer, Sharia law is “contrary to America’s founding principles and may violate federal law and the Constitution.”

Islamic texts may not settle the issue, but they do not seem to support the position taken by the *Times* and CAIR.

The Quran (5:44) declares that failing to “judge by what Allah has revealed” makes one a disbeliever. This would appear to render the U.S. Constitution subordinate to Sharia. Furthermore, the *Traveller*, a classic Islamic manual of Islamic law, notes that “Jihad is a communal obligation.” At best, this affirms the need for a militaristic struggle; at worst it is a call to arms.

Leaving aside the scholarly debate, what matters in the end is how Sharia is interpreted by those who implement it.

Freedom House annually reports on the state of freedom worldwide, rating every country as Free, Partly Free, or Not

Free. Almost all the countries with a Christian majority are rated Free or Partly Free, and all but one with a Muslim majority (Senegal) are rated Not Free or Partly Free. That says it all.

It is undeniably true that the more fully Sharia is implemented, the greater the threat to civil liberties. In other words, in its purist form, Sharia is wholly incompatible with the tenets of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. But Christianity is not.

The three nations which have full Sharia implementation are Iran, Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia. They enforce Sharia as the sole or primary source of all law, including Islamic text legal punishments (amputation, flogging, stoning) and capital penalties for apostasy, blasphemy, adultery, and theft.

Islamic Republic of Iran

Freedom House:

Iran's constitution requires all laws to conform to Twelver Shia (Ja'fari) Sharia. Islamic text legal punishments are authorized and regularly applied. Iran's constitution recognizes only Zoroastrians, Jews, and "Christians by birth" (Armenians, Assyrians, etc.) as protected minorities with limited rights. All others, plus converts, are treated as threats to the Islamic state. Apostasy and blasphemy are punishable by death.

- Iran holds regular elections, but they are not free or fair. The unelected Guardian Council vets and disqualifies candidates, and real power lies with the Supreme Leader and unelected institutions that control the security forces, judiciary, and economy. Media are heavily censored, journalists are arrested or killed, and independent. The judiciary is not independent and serves as a tool of repression: arbitrary arrests, torture, unfair trials, and executions are common.

Afghanistan

Freedom House:

- Since overthrowing the elected republican government in August 2021, the Taliban has ruled Afghanistan as an Islamic Emirate with Sharia as the sole legal framework. The Taliban leader exercises unlimited authority by decree, with no constitution in place. Islamic text legal punishments are enforced nationwide. No non-Islamic public worship is permitted, and apostasy carries a death sentence. Women are almost entirely excluded from public life, including education and employment.
- All political parties and opposition groups are banned. There are no elections, no representative bodies, and no independent media.

The conclusion is obvious: Sharia is the enemy of liberty. We enjoy our freedoms precisely because of our Judeo-Christian heritage.

DON'T FORGET SPLC'S ANTI-CATHOLIC LEGACY

[Bill Donohue](#)

Racism is a curse, and it is therefore understandable that news stories about the corrupt Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) are focused on its funding of the Ku Klux Klan. What is frequently overlooked is its record of targeting Christians, especially Catholics.

Todd Blanche, the acting attorney general, nailed it when he

said SPLC was guilty of “manufacturing racism to justify its existence.” That’s akin to firefighters setting fire to a row of houses so they can put it out, and then demanding an increase in salary and benefits. SPLC has also invented anti-Catholicism to serve its political agenda.

Eleven charges have been brought against SPLC by a federal grand jury, including six counts of wire fraud, four counts of bank fraud and one count of money laundering. It paid at least \$3 million to eight individuals, including those linked to the Klan and neo-Nazi groups. While there is no evidence that it paid anti-Catholics, it is undeniably true that it worked to promote anti-Catholicism.

SPLC has long attacked those who stand for traditional moral values. It has a “hate map” on its website that details those groups it labels as “hate groups.” Besides naming a handful of small wacky right-wing groups, it includes reputable conservative organizations such as Alliance Defending Freedom, Family Research Council and Moms for Liberty. None of these are hate-mongers. The real hate-mongers are those like SPLC who smear responsible entities.

Guess who SPLC denies are “hate groups”? Antifa and Black Lives Matter. Antifa is a loosely knit bunch of urban terrorists, and Black Lives Matter is a racist bunch of thugs. But not to SPLC. “Designating Antifa as Domestic Terrorist Organization Is Dangerous,” and “Black Lives Matter Is Not a Hate Group.” The violence these two groups have engaged in is well documented. By contrast, the conservative organizations it cites as “hate groups” have never threatened, harmed or killed anyone.

SPLC does not list the Catholic League as a “hate group,” per se, but it has several listings of us. To take one example, we defended President Trump’s banning of trans persons from the military. It was horrified when I said, “Kudos to Trump for banning men and women who switch their genitals from the

military. The armed forces are not a lab for sexual engineers.”

It is telling that it blames me for promoting hatred because I have objected to publicly funded artistic displays that show large ants crawling all over Jesus on the Cross. I am the problem for objecting, not the bigots who defile Christ. And so on.

It also got bent out of shape when I commented on an animal shelter that resisted a dog owner’s request that his pet be euthanized because the owner thought the animal was homosexual. To which I said, “Being gay is not only a bonus for humans these days, it is a definite plus for dogs as well.” Normal people laugh; abnormal people go berserk.

On a more serious note, SPLC has a history of objecting to bigots who hate Jews and blacks, but it has nothing to say when learning that the same person is also anti-Catholic. That does not offend them.

The granddaddy of them all is when it advised the Biden Justice Department how to sabotage Catholicism.

The FBI, under Biden, conducted a spy operation on traditional Catholics. It did not monitor dissident Catholics who are pro-abortion. No, it only went after those who were—in its own words—“pro life,” “pro-family,” and who “support the biological basis for sex and gender distinction.” They were literally called “domestic terrorists.”

Guess who the Biden FBI leaned on for advice? SPLC. To be sure, there were some FBI agents who warned against using SPLC as a reliable source, but they were overruled. The FBI-SPLC connection was aimed at spying on traditional Catholics so they could smear their reputation and thereby undermine their efforts. Just as SPLC “manufactured racism to justify its existence,” it manufactured anti-Catholicism to justify its existence.

A more despicable organization would be hard to find. It was morally bankrupt from the beginning.

SPLC was founded by Morris Dees. He was fired in 2019. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, some two dozen employees sent a letter to the board of directors before the news broke of Dees' firing. They said that "internal 'allegations of mistreatment, sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and racism threaten the moral authority of this organization and our integrity along with it.'"

Perversely, Dees championed himself as the enemy of white supremacy, yet his own people said he was a racist. But now we know he was not alone in hating blacks. To wit: SPLC likes to grease the Klan.

Similarly, Dees was not the only one responsible for eviscerating the integrity of SPLC. He had nothing to do with declaring war on Catholics. That was left to his successors.

SPLC is positive proof that "The fish stinks from the head down." Lock 'em up!

CHICAGO LAW FIRM SHOWS ITS BIGOTED COLORS

[Bill Donohue](#)

We have previously noted that Rhode Island Attorney General Peter Neronha has decided to conduct an investigation *only* of sexual misconduct by priests, allowing the clergy of every other religion a pass. Worse, he is giving a free pass to the public schools, where the problem—unlike that in the Catholic

Church—is ongoing.

Neronha is conducting a witch hunt: none of the accused in his report are in active ministry. Just as unethical are the lawyers at Pintas & Mullins, a big law firm in Chicago. They are the ones who are fielding clergy abuse claims from alleged victims of priests in Rhode Island.

On the law firm's website, it has a section, "Rhode Island Clergy Abuse Claims." It only applies to the Catholic Church. Ministers, rabbis and imams who rape kids are of no interest to these guys. Just priests.

In a section titled, "Sexual Assault Lawyers Fighting for You," it says, "It should be underscored that these abuses extend to every faith and type of religious institution, including Islam, Judaism, Mormonism, and various denominations of Christianity, as well as in schools connected with these religions." This is a subterfuge. They say they are ready to hold these offenders accountable, yet there is no hot line for them—only for Catholic victims.

On April 21, I called the hot line (800-798-8155) and asked if they would accept cases from victims of ministers, rabbis, imams and public school teachers. The woman stumbled, and in a roundabout way said they would. I then asked why they don't have a hot line for these people. She got nervous and tried to worm her way out of it. I then asked if she were aware that all 75 priests in Rhode Island whom they have an interest in are either dead or have been kicked out of ministry. Sheepishly, she said she knew that. I told her that they were guilty of religious profiling and that they would be hearing from us.

About a month ago, on March 25, I wrote a letter to William Pintas at the law firm. I explained why I was writing and then asked three questions.

- Do you have other websites advertising your law firm's

- services for victims abused by other religious groups?
- How many victims abused by other religious groups has your law firm represented?
 - Is there a similar website for victims who were abused in Rhode Island's public schools?

As to be expected, he did not reply. What was he going to say?

Religious profiling is no less invidious than any other type of profiling. The Rhode Island Attorney General and Pintas & Mullins are wearing their anti-Catholicism on their sleeve. To single out the Catholic Church for a probe of sexual misconduct is just as bigoted as singling out African Americans for street crime.

Contact Pintas & Mullins: questions@pintas.com

ELITES ARE ON DEFENSE

[Bill Donohue](#)

For over a decade, the Catholic League has been fighting diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) policies in the workforce and in schools. They not only discriminate on the basis of race—effectively legalizing racial discrimination against white people—they create unnecessary racial divisions.

We have also been fighting transgenderism, the invidious idea that the sexes are interchangeable. We have not been alone in doing so, but among lay religious advocacy organizations, we have been out in front on this issue from the beginning—when others were too intimidated to speak out.

The good news is that we are winning. We are on offense; our adversaries are on defense. Both DEI and transgenderism have

hit a brick wall and are in decline.

Perhaps the most egregious example of how DEI has corrupted America can be found in the nation's medical schools. When patients undergo the knife, they expect that the surgeon has spent his training knowing how to excel. But for the past several years, reports have surfaced showing how much time medical students are spending learning how racist white people are and how rotten our country is.

Here's the good news. The Liaison Committee on Medical Education, the body that accredits medical schools, has removed the DEI requirement from its protocols. Thus, doctors will now spend more time learning how to be doctors, not social activists.

Corporate America is leading the way retreating from DEI programs. Thousands of diversity jobs have been cut, and mention of DEI in quarterly earning reports has declined dramatically. Changes have also taken place in higher education. After the Supreme Court ruled against affirmative action in 2023, colleges and universities moved away from racist admissions policies.

A decision was recently reached by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to bar men from competing in women's sports, thus relegating transgenderism a mighty blow. Henceforth, all participants will submit to a one-time genetic test; screening via saliva, a cheek swab or a blood sample will be required. Kirsty Coventry, the head of the IOC, said the new policy "is based on science and has been led by medical experts."

Put differently, pro-transgender activists are anti-science. One institution that does not have to change course is the Catholic Church: its teachings on sexuality are in accord with science.

The American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) is leading the way against transmania. The American Psychiatric Association

is beginning to pull back, agreeing with the ASPS that sex-reassignment surgery for those under 19 will not be performed. It was reported by the *New York Times* that the American Medical Association was also on board, but the organization disputes that story.

The U.S. still trails the Brits in stopping these pernicious operations. On December 11, the country's National Health Service banned the use of puberty blockers for young people. We still have some catching up to do.

The U.S. Supreme Court will issue a decision this spring on whether males can compete against females in sports. It should follow the lead of Supreme Court of London which ruled last year that "sex is binary, a person is either a woman or a man." Finally, common sense and science triumph!

The decline, if not the demise, of DEI and transgenderism proves that there is no iron law of history. People make history, not some mysterious materialistic force. The Catholic League is proud of all the media opportunities we have had sounding the alarms over these cruel policies. Cultures change. It is up to us to steer it in the right direction.

Calling the Pope "Liberal"

The following was written by Paul Kengor, the editor-in-chief of the American Spectator and a member of the Catholic League advisory board. This article was originally published in the [American Spectator](#).

Donald Trump's Truth Social post against Pope Leo is unprecedented in the history of the presidency and papacy. No president has ever made such a statement, even as previous

popes urged peace during wartime and opposed specific U.S. interventions. Our Aubrey Harris noted examples going back to Pope Benedict XV and World War I. Others are detailing examples from throughout the 20th century. They've continued into this century.

In recent times, President George W. Bush felt no compulsion to publicly denounce Pope John Paul II when the sainted pontiff opposed the U.S. war in Iraq – a war that Donald Trump opposed. The Bush administration insisted that Saddam Hussein was on the cusp of a nuclear weapon. Donald Trump insists that Bush lied. Today, Trump insists Iran is on the cusp of a nuclear weapon.

Putting aside the basis for those claims, one marvels at the recklessness of Trump's post, including his repeated assertion there and elsewhere that Pope Leo "thinks it's OK for Iran to have a Nuclear Weapon." The pope never said any such thing, just as John Paul II opposed the Iraq war but certainly didn't think it would be okay if Saddam had nukes.

In his Truth Social post, Trump smacked Pope Leo with a litany of blistering charges, most of them distortions and exaggerations (his anger and suspicions of David Axelrod meeting with Leo were more understandable), such as his self-absorbed assertion that "If I wasn't in the White House, Leo wouldn't be in the Vatican." As someone who just published a 400-plus page biography of the American pontiff, I can say emphatically that that's ridiculous.

The cardinal electors in the conclave did not pick Robert Francis Prevost as pope because of Donald Trump.

That said, the one Trump assertion where I feel I can be helpful – given my lifelong study not only of popes and presidents and Catholicism but of conservatism – are the loud claims by Trump and his supporters that Pope Leo is a liberal, a leftist, a person who (in Trump's words) "should get his act

together as Pope, use Common Sense, stop catering to the Radical Left.”

“I’m not a big fan of Pope Leo,” states Trump. “He’s a very liberal person.”

That assertion from Trump is utterly untrue.

Robert Francis Prevost: Conservative Republican

Pope Leo XIV, formerly Robert Francis Prevost, is a conservative. Moreover, he’s a Republican. He has been a conservative and a Republican surely longer than Donald Trump. During his 11- month papacy thus far, that has continued to be the case. And Prevost most certainly has long been a committed Christian longer than Trump. Given Trump’s unhinged Easter Sunday message, as well as other actions (including a blasphemous image), some are arguing that he isn’t a Christian at all, or at least not acting like a very good one. As someone who wrote a piece last year titled, “God and Donald Trump,” I’m not questioning his belief in God.

But for the record, principled Christian convictions are fundamental to a principled conservatism, as I’ll note below.

I don’t have tens of thousands of words here (as I did in my book) to lay out the beliefs of Robert Francis Prevost in this already lengthy piece, but I’ll offer a few examples.

Way back in the late 1970s, when Donald Trump was a libertine playboy who supported abortion, Prevost was walking in the first Marches for Life in Washington, DC. At Villanova University, he started the pro-life club. Those pro-life convictions never wavered. He has been consistently conservative on moral-cultural issues his entire life, and has spoken up throughout his papacy.

Jumping ahead to modern times and the decade before he was elected pope, Prevost in an October 2012 talk at Pope

Benedict's synod on the New Evangelization lamented how the secular Western mass media was promoting "anti-Christian lifestyle choices," including "abortion, homosexual lifestyle, euthanasia" as well as the "redefinition of marriage" and "alternative families comprised of same-sex partners and their adopted children." Prevost had stated:

Western mass media is extraordinarily effective in fostering within the general public enormous sympathy for beliefs and practices that are at odds with the Gospel. For example, abortion, the homosexual lifestyle, euthanasia...

The sympathy for anti-Christian lifestyle choices that mass media fosters is so brilliantly and artfully ingrained in the viewing public, that when people hear the Christian message, it often inevitably seems ideological and emotionally cruel, by contrast to the ostensible humaneness of the anti-Christian perspective. Catholic pastors who preach against the legalization of abortion or the redefinition of marriage, are portrayed as being ideologically driven, severe, and uncaring, not because of anything they say or do, but because their audiences contrast their message with the sympathetic, caring tones of media-produced images of human beings who, because they are caught in morally complex life situations, opt for choices that are made to appear as healthful and good.

Note, for example, how alternative families comprised of same-sex partners and their adopted children are so benignly and sympathetically portrayed in television programs and cinema today.

Needless to say, Donald Trump has never said anything like that. Trump wouldn't because he doesn't believe it.

When these words (accompanied by video) from Prevost were published by Francis X. Rocca in a May 10, 2025 piece for National Catholic Register just two days after Prevost's election as pope, they went viral. Secular leftists roared

that the new pope was “homophobic,” “intolerant,” and a “hater.”

But regardless of the uproar, Prevoost had made clear his position. Since he became pope, he has continued to speak out on these issues – certainly more so in the last year than Trump. In fact, pro-lifers and cultural conservatives have been complaining that Trump (in their view) has abandoned them on issues like abortion since the 2024 presidential campaign.

Since becoming pope, Leo has spoken out more against same-sex marriage and abortion and gender than Trump. Those are defining issues that make one’s conservatism (or lack thereof) clear.

The Pope Is a Republican

Obviously, these cultural-social-sexual views of Prevoost accord with American conservative Republicans and directly oppose American liberal Democrats. As noted by Prevoost’s brother Lou (in an interview with Piers Morgan), the pope is not “woke.” (Lou is a MAGA Trump supporter, which is why Trump says he “likes” Lou: “I like [the pope’s] brother Louis much better than I like him, because Louis is all MAGA.”)

Prevoost spent over two decades in Peru. When he came back home to Illinois, he voted consistently in the state Republican primaries: in 2012, 2014, and 2016. He voted in the general elections in 2012, 2014, 2018, and 2024 (apparently skipping the 2020 election). He voted in the 2024 presidential election via absentee ballot, given that he was a cardinal in Rome that year.

To repeat, when he voted in primaries, he voted not in the Democratic primaries, but Republican.

The True Meaning of Conservatism

Trump and his most devoted followers protest that Pope Leo

isn't with the president on the war and immigration. We could walk through the nuances of those issues. I've written here repeatedly on the pope and the war. This particular pope is an expert on Saint Augustine. He describes himself a "son of Augustine." He headed the international Augustinian order. Anyone with common sense ought to figure that this pope knows a thing or two about, say, Augustinian Just War doctrine, and should concede that he has thought much longer and more carefully about questions of the morality of war more than Donald Trump has.

As for immigration, I could do a separate piece on Leo on immigration, and would there need to make lots of distinctions between him and obnoxious liberal American bishops who are not the measured, careful thinker that the pope is.

But either way, conservatism – as we've long understood it – has never been defined by positions on immigration or even foreign policy, nor a particular military intervention abroad. There has long been a battle between isolationist and interventionist Republicans. A conservative like Pat Buchanan is restrictive on immigration and non-interventionist abroad. Trump himself had that stance in his first term, but not in the second.

Classic conservatism is understood as an attitude, a belief in what T.S. Eliot called the "permanent things." It is based on tradition, on what Russell Kirk called "an enduring moral order," on what Edmund Burke referred to as an "eternal contract" between the living, the dead, and those yet to be born.

Kirk said that conservatives believe "in the existence of certain abiding truths which govern the conduct of human society." Said Kirk: "Men and nations are governed by moral laws; and those laws have their origin in a wisdom that is more than human – in divine justice. At heart, political problems are moral and religious problems. The wise statesman

tries to apprehend the moral law and govern his conduct accordingly.”

Think about that.

Russell Kirk went further: “We have a moral debt to our ancestors, who bestowed upon us our civilization, and a moral obligation to the generations who will come after us. This debt is ordained of God. We have no right, therefore, to tamper impudently with human nature or with the delicate fabric of our civil social order.” Thus, the conservative opposes something like “gay marriage” or “gender transitioning.”

Quoting Edmund Burke, Kirk observed that, “The past is a great storehouse of wisdom; as Burke said, ‘The individual is foolish, but the species is wise.’ The conservative believes that we need to guide ourselves by the moral traditions, the social experience, and the whole complex body of knowledge bequeathed to us by our ancestors.”

Ronald Reagan believed that as well. In a speech at CPAC in February 1977, Reagan put it this way: “Conservative wisdom and principles are derived from willingness to learn, not just from what is going on now, but from what has happened before. The principles of conservatism are sound because they are based on what men and women have discovered through experience in not just one generation or a dozen, but in all the combined experience of mankind.” Reagan there was echoing a quote from G. K. Chesterton.

The likes of Reagan, Kirk, Burke, Chesterton, and William F. Buckley, Jr., noted that a religious foundation is essential to conservatism. They conceded that not all religious people are conservatives and not all conservatives are religious people. And yet, there could be no conservatism without a religious foundation.

Conservatives believe in time-tested values and ideals – the

ones that rightly endure. This enduring moral order is based on natural law and divine law. As for natural law, Cicero said: "True law is right reason in agreement with nature; it is of universal application, unchanging and everlasting." Saint Augustine referred to it as "the law written in the human heart ... the light we call the truth." As Saint Thomas Aquinas put it, natural law allows us to "know what we must do and what we must avoid. God has given this light or law at the creation." All of which bears on this crucial point and theme of this article: This is what Pope Leo believes. Robert Francis Prevost comes to this thinking from a well-formed and well-read Catholic tradition instilled in him over many decades. He had decades of Augustinian education. He did his doctoral work in Canon Law in Rome at the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas, also known as the Angelicum.

The pope is the inheritor of two thousand years of such tradition. He upholds the Magisterial teachings of the Church. This pope gave an excellent speech early in his papacy (on May 17 to the Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation) clarifying the primacy of doctrine over indoctrination. His beliefs are anchored in centuries of carefully constructed doctrinal teachings.

This Is Not Donald Trump

You will notice, of course, that nothing I've laid out here should have a damned thing to do with whether one supports Donald Trump's current war policy or his position on, say, deportations or ICE. Matters like that do not determine whether you're a conservative.

It's highly debatable whether Donald Trump is a conscious conservative at all. I say that not to demean him, nor even to argue against his policies or voting for him. Trump is an altogether different politician. As for how his policy preferences align with conservative beliefs, I wrote a piece

for The American Spectator noting that Trump (at least after his first term) could check most of the boxes to qualify as a "Reagan conservative." Trump expresses less of a classic, principled conservatism than a patriotic populism-nationalism. He believes in lower taxes and largely in free markets and smaller government. His restrained actions abroad in the first term contrast markedly with the first year of his second term, so much so that his supporters are debating whether this America First isolationist has morphed into a foreign interventionist, following less a paleoconservative bent than something more reflective of a neoconservatism that Trump's most vociferous supporters once excoriated.

Donald Trump himself would surely concede that he has no intellectual or deep philosophical understanding of conservatism. He isn't well read in that subject. You wouldn't look to him for an informed contrast between paleoconservatives versus neoconservatives. And that's fine. That's not who he is. And yet, he and his supporters – despite his lack of philosophical-ideological underpinnings – are willing to issue full-throated denunciations of the current pope as "very liberal." How would Donald Trump even know that? Unlike, say, real estate or the stock market, this just isn't his area of expertise or even knowledge.

So, to repeat: how can Trump claim to know and insist and scream and shout that the pope is a liberal/leftist? The answer is as simple as it is silly: because Pope Leo isn't with Donald Trump on Iran and maybe another issue or two. That's astoundingly shallow, but that's why Leo is getting rung up by Trump. If Leo was in his corner, Trump wouldn't be calling him names. He would "like him," just as he "likes" the pope's brother.

Sure, some might argue that Trump's current policies on, say, Iran and immigration are preferable to whatever "policy" the pope might have on those matters. But they shouldn't take the leap – or follow the lead – of Trump in insisting that this

makes Leo a liberal. As Pope Leo noted in his response to Trump, he's not a politician. He's a pope.

Pope Leo is not liberal. He never has been. And he has always been more conservative than Donald Trump. And as the pope said, he is not afraid of the Trump administration and the accusations, nor should he be.

SEAN HANNITY DEAD WRONG ON CLERGY ABUSE

[Bill Donohue](#)

I have known Sean Hannity for years, and he is a good guy. But I cannot allow our friendship to get in the way of my job. He made comments on his April 16 Fox News show about the clergy sexual abuse scandal that are dead wrong. Apparently, he also offended Catholics on his radio show this week.

Sean started out by saying he was raised Catholic, went to Catholic schools and attended a seminary high school. He said he broke away from the Catholic Church because of the clergy sexual abuse scandal. That is his business. But it is my business to correct the record when misstatements of fact abound about this subject.

Sean said, "I left the Catholic Church in large part because of institutionalized corruption. And it was at the parish level to the bishop level, cardinals, all the way to Rome. And you know, the very top scandals, terrible behavior, frankly, went not only unchecked, but they never fully corrected it or dealt with it. And others at the Vatican have totally lost sight of the true meaning of the bible and its teachings."

His sweeping statements do not hold up under scrutiny.

There was a scandal in the Catholic Church, but its heyday ended approximately a half-century ago. Most of the offenses took place between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s. How widespread was it at its height? The *Washington Post* published a survey in 2002 showing that less than 1.5 percent of the estimated sixty thousand or more men who served in the Catholic clergy were accused of the sexual abuse of minors. A *New York Times* survey reported that 1.8 percent of all priests ordained between 1950 and 2001 were accused of sexually abusing minors.

The John Jay College of Criminal Justice issued a study in 2004 that found that in the period 1950-2002, 4 percent of the Catholic clergy were accused of sexually molesting minors. It also found that 149 priests, or 3.5 percent, who had more than ten allegations of abuse were responsible for 26 percent of all the allegations. In other words, of the 4,393 priests who had an accusation made against them between 1950 and 2002 (not all of which were substantiated), a mere 149 of them accounted for more than a quarter of the allegations.

This is a far cry from what Sean would have us believe. A more egregious error is assuming that nothing has changed.

Data from the last year that we have reliable information on, July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024, show that of the 48,176 members of the clergy, exactly two had a substantiated accusation made against him during this period. This means that a whopping 0.004 percent of priests had a substantiated case of sexual abuse made against them by a minor.

Unfortunately, in any institution where adults regularly interact with minors, sexual misconduct is a problem. But there is no institution in American society today, religious or secular, that has *less of a problem with the sexual abuse of minors than the Catholic Church*. To imply otherwise is

irresponsible.

We know that 81 percent of the victims were male, and that 78 percent were postpubescent, meaning that the lion's share of the abuse was committed by homosexuals (3.8 percent were pedophiles). Of course, don't expect the media to report these facts, including Fox News, which is part of the cover-up.

I wrote a book on this subject in 2021, [*The Truth About Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes*](#). When it was released, I was asked to sit for an interview at Fox News. The executives who run the cable TV station said that my book was so controversial (I bet none of them read it) that they would only agree to a debate between me and someone else. Not surprisingly, every notable liberal Catholic turned down the debate. So it never aired. Would that not be called "institutionalized corruption," Sean?

Most priests, at every level, are good men and they do not deserve to be spoken about with derision. The scandal should never have happened, but it is totally unfair to generalize from the few to the collective, regardless of the demographic.

If Sean wants to debate me, he can give me a call. He has my work and home numbers.

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BRIAN KILMEADE DEAD WRONG ON PIUS XII

[Bill Donohue](#)

On April 16, on "Fox & Friends," Brian Kilmeade was critical of Pope Leo XIV, and in the course of his remarks he said the following: "Historically, Pope Pius XII did nothing knowing, documents show that 6 million Jews were being slaughtered. The Vatican knew about it, did nothing, signed a deal with the Nazis not to invade."

Shaking his head in agreement was Rich Lowry, editor-in-chief of National Review.

Besides the incredibly dumb remark about the Vatican deciding not to invade—invade with what?—Kilmeade knows nothing about this subject. He is dead wrong. Apparently, Lowry is just as clueless.

The Vatican archives show concretely that the debate is over. Pope Pius XII did more to save Jews than any other world figure. Here is a quick summary of his heroics taken from my book, *Why Catholicism Matters*.

1940

- In the December 23, 1940 issue of *Time* magazine, Albert Einstein was quoted as saying, "Being a lover of freedom, when the Nazi revolution came to Germany, I looked to the universities to defend it, but the universities were immediately silenced. Then I looked to the great editors of the newspapers, but they, like the universities, were silenced in a few short weeks....Only the Church stood squarely across the path of Hitler's campaign for suppressing the truth."

1941

- In its Christmas Day editorial, the *New York Times* said, "The voice of Pius XII is a lonely voice in the silence and darkness enveloping Europe this Christmas."

1942

- In its Christmas Day editorial, the *New York Times* wrote, "No Christmas sermon reaches a larger congregation than the message Pope Pius XII addresses to a war-torn world this season."

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."
- Speaking about events in 1943, Sir Martin Gilbert, perhaps the foremost historian of the Holocaust, noted that "the test for Pacelli was when the Gestapo came to Rome in 1943 to round up Jews. And the Catholic Church, on his direct authority, immediately dispersed as many Jews as they could."
- In 1943, the World Jewish Congress thanked the pope for persuading Italian authorities to remove 20,000 Jewish refugees from internment camps in Northern Italy.
- On July 25, 1943, Hitler began his plan to kidnap the "Jew-loving" pope.

1944

- Jewish scholar Jenő Levai describes what happened in the spring of 1944 in Hungary. "Over 20,000 passports had been issued by the papal Nuncio—on the average of 500 a day."

1945

- Anton Zolli, the Chief Rabbi in Rome, converted to Catholicism. He explained why in his book, *Why I Became a Catholic*. "No hero in history has commanded such an army; none is more militant, more fought against, none more heroic than that conducted by Pius XII in the name

of Christian Charity.” He chose the name Eugenio (after Eugenio Pacelli, Pius XII) as his baptismal name.

1958

- When the pope died, Golda Meir, Israel’s foreign minister (she would later become prime minister), telegraphed the Vatican saying, “When fearful martyrdom came to our people in the decade of Nazi terror, the voice of the Pope was raised for the victims. The life of our times was enriched by a voice speaking out on the great moral truths above the tumult of daily conflict. We mourn a great servant of peace.”
- Among the Jewish organizations that praised the pope were the following: Anti-Defamation League, the Synagogue Council of America, the Rabbinical Council of America, the New York Board of Rabbis, the American Jewish Committee, the World Jewish Congress, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and the National Council of Jewish Women.

Former Israeli diplomat and author Pinchas Lapid estimated that approximately 860,000 Jewish lives were saved by Pope Pius XII. One thing is certain: no leader, religious or secular, did more to save Jews than Pope Pius XII. He is more than a “Righteous Gentile”—he deserves to be made a saint.

If Kilmeade knew anything about the critics of Pius XII, he would know that many have had to walk back their accusations.

In 2017, the BBC announced the results of an internal probe of the war record of Pope Pius XII. It said it was wrong to characterize him as being “silent” during the Holocaust. In 1999, the author of *Hitler’s Pope*, John Cornwell, admitted that he was wrong in making this assessment, and retracted his charge that the pope supported Hitler.

Catholic League board of advisors, University of Mississippi

New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani is opposed to providing protection for people of faith. He is on the side of the bullies. But it is a losing cause. He can veto the bill, but it will mean nothing: the Council vote is veto proof. The deadline is April 25.

Here are the five City Council members who are siding with Mamdani.

Shahana Hanif

She liked and retweeted “Globalize the Intifada” in 2021; she later deleted the post. In 2023, she voted against a resolution that sought to recognize April 29 as “End Jew Hatred Day.”

Alexa Avilés

She has no record of supporting religious liberty legislation.

Chi A. Ossé

He has made vile anti-Italian comments. He has also posted tweets bragging how he “Knocked over one of those Jesus worshippers on the subway this morning.”

Tiffany L. Cabán

She has made racist statements attacking white people and has no record of supporting religious liberty legislation.

Kayla Santosuosso

She has denounced anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim acts.

A number of activists have also weighed in, taking Mamdani’s side. The the most prominent is Gustavo Gordillo, Co-Chairman of the New York City Democratic Socialists of America. He is known for his anti-American and anti-Israel remarks.

Last year, he spoke at an anti-Israel rally saying, “They make

figures like Hamas and, quote unquote, terrorists into effective enemies,” and, “The terror comes from the capitalists and their pawns...The terror comes from the fascist governments and their ICE squads.”

It is not surprising to learn that most of Mamdani’s anti-religion supporters are imbued with hate. They are very much like him.

As for the mayor, his opposition to protecting houses of worship might be different if it were mosques, and not synagogues and churches, that are being targeted. But that is not the case. It is Christian churches that are being invaded, and it is Jewish people going to synagogues that are being harassed.

Mamdani’s reluctance to sign or veto this legislation is telling. But it is what we have come to expect of him.