

GAY L.I. CATHOLIC DECEIVES MEDIA

Recently a contingent of gay and gay-friendly organizations, GLAAD, Dignity and Faithful America, descended upon the Diocese of Rockville Centre's central administrative buildings to hold a press conference requesting that Nicholas Coppola be reinstated to the post he held at St. Anthony's in Oceanside. The protestors allegedly brought over 18,000 petitions with them which they planned to present to Rockville Centre Bishop William F. Murphy.

Coppola was dismissed from his voluntary positions at the parish after it was disclosed that he had "married" his boyfriend late last year. When the news of this case broke, Bill Donohue commented that internal Church affairs were not public business, and this applied to both outside advocacy groups as well as government agencies. Among those affairs are employment decisions.

Just as it is the right of a yeshiva to insist that its employees abide by Judaic strictures, so, Donohue argued, it is the right of a Catholic school to insist that its employees respect Catholic teachings.

How ironic it is that those who have been screaming the most about the evils of bullying are the very ones who are its greatest practitioners—against Christians, no less. Clearly they themselves have not learned the virtue of tolerance.

When the "protestors" arrived at the diocesan building, they were met by a security guard who took the boxes and promised to pass them on. Interestingly, it seems that the media were snookered. Diocesan officials had quite a surprise when they opened the three boxes.

Had the media shown an ounce of curiosity regarding this

matter, they would have asked Coppola to see what was in the three boxes that allegedly contained evidence of those who signed the petition.

It was discovered that two of the boxes were empty; the contents of the other box were so small they could easily have fit into a large envelope. Considering that Coppola and his homosexual allies intentionally deceived the media, his credibility is shot. Moreover, no one is stopping Coppola from joining a religion that accepts his view of marriage. If he respected diversity, he would practice it by finding a new home. Instead, he seeks to impose his agenda on the rest of us, thus showing nothing but contempt for the rights of Catholics.

It's too bad Catholics on Long Island did not get a chance to see what was in the three boxes. It would have been a great optic.

GAY MARRIAGE AND THE “ME DECADES”

In the recent Supreme Court oral arguments over Proposition 8 and same-sex marriage, Charles Cooper, the lawyer defending Proposition 8, urged the high court not to refocus “the definition of marriage away from the raising of children and to the emotional needs and desires of adults.”

In doing so, Cooper was simply restating the basic sociological observation that the purpose of marriage is to serve the best interests of children in the institution of the family. To put it differently, marriage was not created to make adults happy. Not long thereafter, *New York Times*

columnist Maureen Dowd took Cooper to task, asking, "Did he miss the last few Me Decades?" Dowd just didn't get it. It's precisely because he didn't miss those decades that he seeks not to sustain them.

Cooper's adversary, Theodore Olson, also shared Dowd's handicap. Olson argued that marriage is a "personal right," not "society's right." If marriage were in fact a personal right, then Olson needed to explain why the Framers of the Constitution, along with all of the jurists since the 18th century, never discovered it. Also, societies do not possess rights—they have interests. Only individuals have rights.

In his dissent in the 2003 *Lawrence v. Texas* decision that legalized homosexuality, Justice Antonin Scalia warned that if the laws against homosexuality were to be jettisoned, then there would be no principled basis left on which to proscribe such things as polygamy and incest. Scalia was widely scorned for saying so. Interestingly enough, though, Justice Sonia Sotomayor asked Olson if gay marriage were okay, then why not polygamy and incest? Without a trace of evidence, Olson responded that the two involve exploitation and abuse. What is equally interesting here is that only one newspaper in the United States, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, cited her concern.

It might well benefit Olson to meet with Allen and Patricia Muth. Brother and sister, they have long been seeking to get married, and they would take great umbrage at the very idea that they are exploited or abused. Ditto for thousands of women in polygamous relationships: they love their husbands and their co-wives. Moreover, Kinsey associate Wardell Pomeroy argued over forty years ago that incest "can sometimes be beneficial." In short, the "Me Decades" are on trial.

CUOMO ENDANGERS MINORITY WOMEN

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo is about to unveil what promises to be the most radical proposal ever entertained at the state level. It's also the most dangerous, especially for poor minority women. While Cuomo has yet to reveal the details of his abortion bill, from what we know there will be no restrictions on this life-ending procedure. Abortion would be removed from the penal code, and would instead be regulated through public health law. Practically speaking, this means that an unborn child wouldn't be considered a victim in a crime where he is intentionally killed.

Perhaps most ominous, at least for poor African-American and Hispanic women, it would mean that non-physicians could abort their babies. In other words, Park Avenue white girls will have their abortions attended to by licensed physicians, while poor women of color will be serviced by non-doctors. Guess who will be most at risk when complications arise? Yet it is the so-called champions of the poor and non-whites, e.g., Planned Parenthood and the *New York Times*, who are the strongest proponents of this two-class, racially divisive system.

As always, no one suffers more from liberalized abortion laws than minorities. In New York State the abortion rate is double the national average, and in New York City the rate for black women exceeds 60 percent. This phenomenon is not by accident—it is the result of public policy; in February 2013, it was reported that the “morning-after pill” in New York City was being distributed without parental consent, in schools that served mostly African-Americans and Latinos.

This isn't the Ku Klux Klan pushing to lower medical standards in abortion clinics with a high population of non-white women. It's mostly white, well-educated friends of the poor. While

this may not be their intent, nevertheless large numbers of women, and children of color, are being treated like guinea pigs. What's even more troubling is the Cuomo administration's failure to learn from the Pennsylvania experience: when abortion standards are relaxed, it opens the door to abuse.

Under Pennsylvania Governor Robert Casey, Sr., a Catholic pro-life Democrat, abortion clinics were held to rigid standards. But after Casey left office in 1995, a more "abortion-friendly" milieu took root. Authorities admit that inspections of abortion clinics stopped completely in some locales. Enter Dr. Kermit Gosnell, who on March 18th was put on trial for killing one woman and seven babies born alive. His clinic is now known as a "house of horrors," a place where his untrained staff helped deliver babies who were then killed with scissors. Gosnell would plunge scissors into their necks, cutting their spinal cords. He did this at least 16,000 times. His clients were all poor women who lived in the inner-city neighborhoods that comprise West Philadelphia. Gosnell never received obstetrics or gynecology certification.

Gosnell wasn't actually apprehended by state abortion inspectors. Instead, his "house of horrors" was discovered accidentally in 2010 by FBI agents looking for drugs. They found fetal remains stored in jars and freezers, along with dirty medical equipment. After speaking with the authorities, Gosnell reportedly ate dinner, never removing his bloody latex gloves. To make matters even more sickening, Gosnell's lawyer told the court that his client was a "victim of an elitist, racist prosecution." That Gosnell intentionally chose to murder poor non-whites, many of them immigrants, seems to have escaped Gosnell's attorney.

After Pennsylvania lawmakers learned of Gosnell's monstrous acts, they passed a bill in 2011 that outlined new criteria for facilities that perform surgical abortions. In 2012, 92 abortion restrictions were passed. Today there are 17 abortion providers left in Pennsylvania; in 2012, abortions declined by

44.8 percent (a decline in abortions for the third year in a row). Though there's still work to be done (there has been a spike in abortion complications) medical standards have increased, and poorly trained staff have been eliminated.

Sadly, instead of raising the qualifications for those in the abortion industry, Governor Cuomo wants to lower them. While Gosnell's operation wouldn't be legal, still, by lowering standards, we're likely to learn of more horror stories, not less. Moreover, it is not just a change in credentials that is at stake; when expectations decline (as happened in Pennsylvania once Casey left office), it sends a message that is picked up by everyone. That the message is not one that will result in safer conditions for black and Hispanic women is beyond debate.

Currently, New York State law says that only a "duly licensed physician" may perform an abortion, but under Cuomo any "licensed healthcare practitioner" could do the job. Even honest abortion supporters know how irresponsible this idea is. Even the ACLU admitted that allowing non-physicians to do abortions put women's lives in jeopardy.

While Governor Cuomo's intention isn't to punish poor black and Hispanic women, his proposal would do just that. It would allow abortionists who aren't trained as physicians to put these women at greater risk than their more affluent white cohorts. This alone should be enough to convince the governor not to go down that road. But don't bet on it.

This is a shorter version of Bill Donohue's article that was recently published by Newsmax.

BISHOPS FIND HHS REVISIONS FLAWED

The March 20 statement by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (made by general counsel Anthony Picarello and associate general counsel Michael F. Moses) on the HHS revisions is the most definitive assessment to date. Though they concede that “the definition of an exempt ‘religious employer’ has been revised to eliminate some of the intrusive and constitutionally improper government inquiries into religious teaching and beliefs that were inherent in an earlier definition,” the changes are still

inadequate. Even the Obama administration admits that its definition of a “religious employer” excludes many organizations that are widely understood as such.

Individual business owners also don’t receive the relief they seek from the mandate. Moreover, the terms of what qualifies as an “accommodation” lack clarity, thus creating unnecessary confusion. Most important, the HHS mandate as currently written represents “an unprecedented (and now sustained) violation of religious liberty by the federal government.” In other words, despite some movement on the part of the administration, most Catholic entities are still vulnerable to the HHS edict. The only way to truly resolve this issue is for the administration to withdraw the mandate. Surely it could accommodate women seeking services that the Catholic Church sees as morally objectionable with a tax credit, or by some other means. What it does not have to do is burden religious institutions.

HHS MANDATE DISPUTE GOES UNREPORTED

Early in March, Rep. Diane Black of Tennessee had introduced a bill, The Health Care Conscience Rights Act. This bill, if passed, would challenge the Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate and it would help protect the religious consciences of employers.

To date, however, there still has been little reporting on this bill by the mainstream media. The bill, which had the explicit support of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), seeks to provide conscience rights protections in the field of health care. More specifically, the legislation would ensure that the ObamaCare regulation that forces employers to give coverage for abortion-inducing drugs, sterilization and contraception, could not override the conscience rights of objecting parties.

Cardinal Sean O'Malley of Boston, who heads the USCCB's Committee on Pro-Life Activities, had written to every member of the House of Representatives on March 8th, asking for their support. He urged them to make this a priority, incorporating it in the upcoming "must-pass" legislation, writing: "The Catholic Church daily contributes to the welfare of American society through a network of schools, social services, hospitals and assisted living facilities... The legal protections which allow us to fulfill our obligation to serve others, without compromising our religious or moral convictions, are essential to the continued vitality of these ministries."

When it comes to Catholic issues, the big dailies don't lack for coverage. But on this dispute, which pits the bishops against the Obama administration, there has been a blackout. Among those not reporting on this story are the *New York*

Times, the Wall Street

Journal, the Washington Post, the Philadelphia Inquirer, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, the Chicago Tribune, the Miami Herald, the Dallas Morning News, the Houston Chronicle, the Denver Post, the San Francisco Chronicle and the Los Angeles Times. The lone newspaper that covered this subject was the *Washington Times*. Not surprisingly, the failure of the aforementioned newspapers to report on this story accounts for the lack of coverage by the broadcast news programs, as well as cable TV.

Religious liberty should mean something even to those who aren't observant. The core issue is whether the federal government can impose a secular agenda on people of all faiths. Catholics particularly have been in this fight ever since the HHS mandate was introduced. For the media to ignore this issue is simply irresponsible.

LEAD US, HOLY FATHER

This ad appeared on the op-ed page of the April 15th edition of the *New York Times*.

LEAD US, HOLY FATHER

As soon as you were introduced as Pope Francis, you impressed us, Catholic and non-Catholic, with your humility and ability to connect with common people. Your long-standing outreach to the least among us, beginning with the unborn, is especially welcome. So is your commitment to the poor, and your equally strong rejection of a politicized theology.

The world is already looking to you as it looks to no other leader, secular or religious. The issues facing us in the third millennium are daunting; they also provide you with an opportunity to find just solutions. We are confident you will seize this moment.

Religious liberty is under attack, in vastly different ways. Christians and Jews are being slaughtered in shocking numbers in parts of the Middle East, simply because of their faith. In the West, some want to stifle the public expression of religion, seeking to insulate its effects. Government encroachment on religion, supposedly a taboo, is now a reality, including in the U.S., a country expressly founded on freedom of religion.

No one better understood what is driving the murderous conditions in the Middle East, or the assault on religious liberty in the West, than your predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI. Faith untethered from reason yields religious fanaticism; reason absent faith yields extremism. Both have led to genocide.

In Europe and in the Americas, the ascent of radical secularism has taken a heavy toll. Seductive in its appeal, the secular option alone ignores the hand of God in the everyday world. Core institutions such as marriage and the family are under assault from those who embrace an ethic of radical individualism. Similarly, life, from the time of conception to natural death, is threatened not by tyrants, but by those who speak the language of compassion.

These matters require strong moral leadership, and it is our good fortune that you are positioned to exercise it. Now more than ever the world needs a voice of moral sanity, one that provides clear answers to the current state of moral confusion. The Catholic League is proud to stand with you, and we look forward to celebrating your pontificate.



CATHOLIC LEAGUE for Religious and Civil Rights

450 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York 10123

(212) 371-3191 Fax: (212) 371-3394

www.catholicleague.org

Bill Donohue
President

A MORE EXCELLENT WAY

Patrick J. McNamara, Ph.D.

George Weigel, *Evangelical Catholicism: Deep Reform in the 21st Century Church* (New York: Basic Books, 2013).

No one doubts the need for deep reform in the Church, but few agree on how to go about it. George Weigel, one of our foremost Catholic intellectuals, offers a comprehensive reform proposal transcending the liberal and conservative labels that have obscured Catholic thought for decades. While Weigel calls this program “Evangelical Catholicism,” he notes that it’s not *his* program, but *the Church’s*. The book is divided into two parts. The first presents the Evangelical Catholic vision in full, while the second gives details for actual reform.

Some might find the title a bit misleading. It has nothing whatever to do with Evangelical Protestantism, but it has much to do with the “New Evangelization” called for by Popes Blessed John Paul II and Benedict XVI, which seeks to re-Christianize a secularized world. Evangelical Catholicism is a new term denoting an ancient task: as St. Pius X put it, “to restore all things in Christ.” The two pillars of Evangelical Catholicism are Word and Sacrament, and its criteria are Truth (with a capital “T”) and Mission (with a capital “M”).

Today Christianity risks being reduced to “a private lifestyle of no political consequence.” Weigel cites “soft totalitarianism”: the state’s attempt to redefine the basic meaning of both humanity and marriage, undermining “the social and cultural foundations of democracy.” In Canada, for example, “human rights commissions” and “human rights tribunals” fine pastors invoking the biblical understanding of marriage. The “gay marriage” movement, Weigel writes, is “nothing less than an effort to redefine human nature through the use of state power, if necessary.”

Neither “progressive” nor “traditionalist” Catholicism, Weigel contends, are equipped to meet this challenge. Faced with religious relativism, the former sees Catholicism “as one possible story—one possible truth—in a pluralistic world of

truths and 'narratives,' none of which can claim the mantle of certainty." The latter "denies the reality of the conditions under which the Gospel must be proclaimed in the twenty-first century—and thus renders itself evangelically sterile..." In short, one group wants to tighten up the rules; the other wants to loosen them.

Both are caught up in an outdated model, that of the Counter-Reformation. Based on a catechetical-devotional approach, this model worked well in the aftermath of the Reformation, but fell apart under what Weigel calls the "acids of modernity." Today believers face what one Jewish legal scholar terms "Christophobia." What is needed, Weigel suggests, is a bold, fresh approach providing the tools to evangelize, to begin a dialogue with modernity that doesn't water down essential Catholic truths.

Vatican II called for that dialogue, along with a "radical reorientation of the Church to the Gospel." The council was no radical break with the past. Weigel reassesses the pontificate of Leo XIII (1878- 1903) and his influence on the council. In his attempt to bring a Catholic voice to bear in all areas of modern life, from the social to the intellectual, Leo and his successors actually paved the way for Vatican II.

When Pope Blessed Pius IX died, Weigel writes, "many European statesmen and intellectuals imagined the papacy, and by extension, the Catholic Church—to be finished as a force in human affairs." One of the keynotes of Pius' later years was a "blanket, antimodern rejectionism" of the secular world, as seen in his 1864 *Syllabus of Errors*, which had condemned the notion that "The Roman Pontiff can, and ought to, reconcile himself, and come to terms with, progress, liberalism and modern civilization."

Leo aimed to build "a distinctive Catholic intellectual engagement with modernity." He made Aquinas the cornerstone for Catholic intellectual life; he encouraged Biblical studies

at a time when modern scholarship was eliminating the faith factor; he laid the foundation for modern Catholic social thought with *Rerum Novarum* (1891). As a professional diplomat he kept the lines of communication open with France's Third Republic rather than simply condemn its anticlerical tendencies. Weigel sees Leo's approach memorialized in the statue above his tomb:

"[T]he statue of Leo XIII depicts the Pope standing upright, right arm extended and foot thrust forward, as if inviting the world into a serious conversation about the human prospect—as if leading the Church out of the past and into a new, confident, evangelical future."

This task involves the entire Body of Christ. It begins by encountering the person of Jesus Christ in the Gospel and growing in His friendship. Weigel adds: "You are not a Catholic in the full sense of the term because your grandmother was born in County Cork or Palermo or Guadalajara... You are a Catholic because you have met the Lord Jesus and entered into a mature friendship with Him."

Evangelical Catholicism calls for, as St. Paul says, a "more excellent way" than a concessionary, nostalgic or lukewarm approach. "The lay vocation," Weigel writes, "is evangelism: of the family, the workplace, and the neighborhood, and thus of culture, economics, and politics." Evangelical Catholicism, in short, is a culture that "seeks to be a culture-forming counterculture for the sake of the world, its healing, and its conversion."

In discussing specific reform measures, Weigel is always idealistic but never impractical. In his chapter on episcopal reform, he calls for a greater balance in implementing the bishop's office of teaching, sanctifying and governing. Too often, he contends, the teaching aspect has been underemphasized. While the Vatican has moved quickly on bishops who have created "financial shambles" in their

dioceses, he asks, "But what of doctrinal shambles? What of disciplinary shambles?"

Weigel correctly notes that men who never should have been ordained priests "slipped through a seminary system that had, from the late 1960's through the late 1980's, looked more to psychology and psychiatry than to moral theology and sacramental theology in dealing with aberrant personalities and grave sins." Fidelity and a deeper conversion to Christ the High Priest, he argues, are essential components of any clerical reform. A celibacy, albeit one bereft of clericalism, is more needed than ever to challenge the "self-absorption of post-modernity."

With regard to liturgical reform, Weigel calls for a liturgy that "is not focused on itself," and he suggests a literal reorientation of the priest and people *ad orientem* might help in this regard:

"Does the now conventional, but hardly traditional, priest-facing-people-over-the-altar orientation contribute, however unintentionally, to a loss of the congregation's self-awareness as God's people on pilgrimage through history toward the fulfillment of God's promises?"

He calls for a greater focus on the church building as sacred space. He also calls for a "great cleansing of hymnals and missalettes," taking for example a popular postconciliar hymn, "Love One Another." "Who," he asks, "is praying to whom?" Rather than calling for a return to the preconciliar Mass, Weigel argues for "a more dignified celebration of the *Novus Ordo*."

For Weigel, a major aspect of deep reform has to include the religious orders, but he observes that many of them have fallen into what he calls a "psychological schism." While they didn't formally leave the Church, they had "no affective connection to the institutional Church and its supreme

authority.” While Rome’s approach seems to be “one of letting them die a natural death,” Weigel wonders if this approach isn’t a major impediment to the New Evangelization.

For a long time, religious were predominant in Catholic education, healthcare and charitable work. Today laypeople have taken over this work and in many cases have proven more faithful to preserving Catholic identity and mission. Whatever their field of work, they need to see themselves as missionaries; “Lay Catholics do not need anyone’s permission to be the evangelical witnesses they were called to be: to be an evangelist is a baptismal obligation, not a privilege conceded by ecclesiastical authority.” How they live should be “counter-cultural in the twenty-first century.”

An important part of Evangelical Catholic reform is in the Catholic intellectual life. Catholic higher education in particular must reject “the post-modern subjectivism that speaks only of ‘your truth’ and ‘my truth,’ confident in the conviction that every genuine search for truth eventually leads to the Truth who is God the Holy Trinity.” There’s also the question of how faithful to the Catholic intellectual mission some schools are:

“Catholic universities that sponsor productions of the Vagina Monologues and whose student-life offices encourage LGBTQ clubs, but which do not require their students to take courses in Augustine and Aquinas, or to read and absorb... key documents of Vatican II... have not begun to grasp the unique nature and mission of a Catholic institution of higher education.”

While Weigel praises the work being done at schools like the University of Dallas, still there may come a point where there’s little hope to reclaim Catholic identity. In this case, the local bishop may have to step in and declare that a certain college or university is no longer Catholic.

The Church’s role in public life is an urgent issue as modern

society increasingly measures humans by their utility rather than their dignity. Nihilism, skepticism and moral relativism all serve to “erode the very foundation of the democratic project.” Secularism has strongly affected the Church’s work in this area, where, Weigel writes, “two generations of ineffective catechesis... have produced many Catholic politicians who are baptized pagans.” Weigel suggests here an intensified focus on educating the Catholic people, a task more necessary than ever in an increasingly secularized age.

Today he sees a “far more evangelically assertive model of the papacy, a model in which the Bishop of Rome is, above all, the Church’s first witness.” Among the qualities he lists for a potential pope are resilience, good judgment, strategic vision, courage and pastoral experience. He also calls for a reassessment of the Curia’s performance in the light of how they contribute to the Evangelical Catholic mission.

Catalyst readers will surely enjoy this highly readable work: bold and apologetic, but never apologizing.

Dr. Patrick McNamara is Director of Communications for the Catholic League.