

POPE FRANCIS INSPIRES; WINS WORLDWIDE APPLAUSE

It didn't take long before the world embraced Pope Francis. The election of Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio to be the new leader of 1.2 billion Catholics was greeted with applause around the globe, but nowhere was it more apparent than in Latin America.

Ten days before the election, Bill Donohue was quoted in the *Los Angeles Times* expressing what he would like to see in the new pope. "If the new pope embodies the attributes of humility and courage, he will likely succeed," Donohue said. Pope Francis certainly fits the bill. Indeed, his humbleness instantly proved to be irresistible, and not just within Catholic circles.

Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, said he is "encouraged that Pope Francis has worked with Lutherans in Argentina," and praised him for his "humility and solidarity with those who live on the margins of society." Gary Bauer, a key evangelical leader, congratulated Pope Francis saying, evangelicals "have a stake in who is elected pope, because without a strong pope, evangelicals will lose their best allies in the most important cultural and political battles of our age."

Rev. Samuel Rodriguez of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference said the cardinals who voted for Bergoglio proved their "courageous, bold and catalytic determination." Nihad Awad, director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, pledged "the Muslim community's support and cooperation."

The reaction from most Jewish leaders was ecstatic. Abraham Foxman of the ADL praised the leadership of Pope Francis,

especially for his outreach to Jews in Argentina. Rabbi David Rosen of the American Jewish Committee said the pope was a “warm and sweet and honest man” who often expressed his “solidarity with the Jewish community.” The president of the World Jewish Congress, Ronald Lauder, said the pope was “no stranger to us,” noting his “open-mindedness.” Rabbi Joseph Potasnik of the New York Board of Rabbis lauded the pope for his “history of outstanding relationships with the Jewish people.”

Pope Francis has rightly received kudos for his dedication to the poor. Perhaps less well known is his rejection of liberation theology, a Marxist-infused ideology that claims solidarity with the needy, but in reality is more interested in fomenting class warfare. In other words, he sees through those who want to hijack Catholicism to serve a political agenda.

The Catholic League will run a tribute to Pope Francis on April 15; it will appear on the op-ed page of the *New York Times*.

MONAGHAN PREVAILS

Thomas Monaghan, a member of the advisory board of the Catholic League, prevailed in federal district court against the Obama administration’s Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate. On March 14, Judge Lawrence P. Zatkoff of the Eastern District of Michigan granted a Motion for a Preliminary Injunction against enforcement of the HHS mandate.

Monaghan and his property management company, Domino’s Farms Corporation, is being represented by the Thomas More Law Center (Monaghan sold Domino’s Pizza in 1998; Domino’s Farms

is a separate entity).

The Obama administration's lawyers contended that once a business owner chooses to enter into the marketplace, he no longer is entitled to exercise his religious rights. But Judge Zatkoff disagreed, saying, "It is in the best interest of the public that Monaghan not be compelled to act in conflict with his religious beliefs."

The attorney for the Thomas More Law Center, Erin Mersino, nailed it just right: "The HHS Mandate forces our clients to provide abortion causing drugs to their employees when doing so is a direct violation of the teachings of the Catholic Church and our clients' sincerely held religious beliefs. The Court's decision today upholds everyone's freedom of religion and rights protected by the Constitution."

There will no doubt be an appeal to the Sixth Circuit Court, and eventually all of these matters are bound to wind up in the U.S. Supreme Court. It is encouraging, however, that Tom Monaghan and his able lawyers won this round.

SPARKS FLY OVER PAPAL TRANSFER

William A. Donohue

The lead story in this edition of *Catalyst* covers the effusive praise heaped on Pope Francis, and the warm reception he received from leaders of other religions. But we would be remiss if we didn't address the explosion of hatred that the papal transfer engendered.

All of the following comments were made within the first 24 hours of the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI:

Adele M. Stan, AlterNet: "Because of the rigging done to the College of Cardinals by Benedict's predecessor [sic], the next pope will likely be no less authoritarian, no less women-hating, no less gay-bashing, and no more reform-minded."

Andrew Sullivan, The Dish: "What fascinates me is whether he can now be prosecuted for 'crimes against humanity' for having enabled and concealed the rape of countless children in an institution under his direct authority."

Michael Brendan Dougherty, Slate: "Pope Benedict set out to reform a Catholic Church in tatters—but failed."

Rabbi Arthur Waskow, The Shalom Center: "Pope Benedict does not deserve praise from any religious leader who sees women as worthy of full respect."

Chez Pазienza, Huffington Post: "Maybe, if the world is lucky, the next pope won't be so stubborn in the face of overwhelming evidence of children being sexually abused by priests or even complicit in the cover-up of those priests' actions."

Kristen Houghton, Huffington Post: "The almost-unheard of step of resignation by a reigning pontiff has touched off a feeding frenzy of speculation...Certainly the Catholic Church is under investigation, as is the pope himself, concerning the horrible, disreputable crime of pedophilia which has been pretty much swept under the expensive Vatican rugs."

Margaret Carlson, Bloomberg: "Under his leadership, the church continued to deny its perfidy."

All of the following comments were made within the first 24 hours of Pope Francis' election:

Mary Johnson, former nun, on "Morning Joe": "My hope is that this new pope might take a look at the Catholics who have felt

marginalized recently, gay and lesbian Catholics, divorced Catholics. Catholics who see their home in the church, but don't feel entirely welcome."

Eduardo Peñalver, writing at *Commonweal*: "I'm going to take a break from my Lenten 'fast' from blogging to just note that it seems likely to me that picking a man as Pope who held a position of authority in the Church in Buenos Aires during Argentina's dirty war seems likely to dredge up some bad memories and perhaps even a few inconvenient truths."

Herndon Graddick, GLAAD: After criticizing Pope Francis for not accepting the gay agenda, he said, "Pedophilia has run rampant in the Catholic Church with little more than collusion from the Vatican."

Luke Russert, NBC: "Instead of a Catholic faith where priests are expected to completely suppress their sexuality, an acknowledgment [from Pope Francis] that many of the Church's recent problems stem from the unnatural requirement of celibacy."

Salon: The pope "unsurprisingly has terrible views on gay and reproductive rights."

Huffington Post: "Papa Don't Preach! Pope Called Gay Marriage 'Destructive Attack on God's Plan'...Staunchly Opposes Abortion, Contraception."

There were many other comments like these, especially from dissident Catholic groups like Voice of the Faithful, as well as from anti-Catholic organizations like Catholics for Choice.

In one way, we should welcome these remarks. They show that there's absolutely nothing any pope can do to satisfy those who hate us. Ergo, attempts to appease them are not only bound to fail, they're misguided: those who left the Church and don't want to return—except on their own terms—are as wrongheaded as they are incorrigible.

As for those who smear us and are not Catholic, they can take a walk.

Few things are more troubling than intellectual dishonesty. If those ripping the Church about women priests were sincere, they'd focus on real sex segregation. Muslims, for example, routinely exclude women from public gatherings: demonstrations and prayer vigils are typically all-male events. Does anyone call them out on this? Not on your life (pun intended).

Last year, Orthodox Jews in New York held a rally at Citi Field, home of the Mets, to combat the evils of the Internet and the alleged damages caused by electronic devices. They filled the stadium—tens of thousands showed up. Not one was a woman, yet no one complained. Nor has anyone ever complained about the many Orthodox Jewish traditions that are reserved for men only.

It should also be noted that virtually every Catholic teaching on sexuality we have was first broached by our Jewish brothers. Yet all the scorn is targeted at us. Hypocrisy is too kind a word to describe this condition.

At the end of the day, none of this will affect Pope Francis. He has seen adversity before, and he has prevailed. We will do what we can to see that he succeeds.

UNSUBSTANTIATED ACCUSATIONS

Bill Donohue

The Catholic Church has many teachings that touch on public issues, and it's only fair that they be subject to critical analysis. But it's hardly too much to ask that its critics

substantiate their charges. Unfortunately, the tendency of the media to swing wildly became commonplace once it was learned that Pope Benedict XVI had resigned.

Take, for one example, a recent front-page story in the *New York Times*. Reporter Laurie Goodstein wrote a piece containing factual errors and blatant omissions; she also used many sources with damaged credentials.

Goodstein claimed that Benedict “put children at risk by failing to report pedophiles or remove them from the priesthood.” This is thrice incorrect: (a) many priests have been removed from ministry under Benedict (b) children have not been put at risk and (c) pedophiles have never been the problem.

Rev. Marcial Maciel was rightly cited as “a pathological abuser and liar,” but for Goodstein to mention his name while contending that the pope never removed a molesting priest from ministry, was positively astonishing. Who does she think dumped Maciel in 2006? Moreover, the pope not only removed him, he put the entire order of priests he founded, the Legion of Christ, in receivership.

Goodstein’s claim of children being at risk under Benedict while citing pedophilia as the problem, has been undercut by many scholars, including one she cites, psychology professor Thomas G. Plante. Plante found that “80 to 90% of all priests who in fact abuse minors have sexually engaged with adolescent boys, not prepubescent children. Thus, the teenager is more at risk than the young altar boy or girls of any age.”

In other words, the scandal—which ended more than a quarter-century ago (most abuse cases occurred between the mid-60s and mid-80s)—rarely involved children. This finding is consistent with the work of the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, which found that less than five percent of molesting priests were pedophiles. In almost every case, it’s been homosexual

priests hitting on teenage boys, the most common offense of which has been “inappropriate touching.”

Unfortunately, for politically correct reasons, even those who honestly collect data, including Plante and the John Jay professors, are reluctant to discuss the role homosexual priests have played in molesting minors. In fairness, it's important to keep in mind that while most molesting priests have been homosexuals, not pedophiles, most homosexual priests have never been molesters. One reason this problem is almost non-existent today is because Benedict made it very difficult for practicing homosexuals to enter the priesthood. The results are in the numbers: in the last ten years, the annual average number of credible accusations made against over 40,000 priests has been in the single digits.

It needs to be said that the *New York Times* doesn't exactly come to the table with clean hands on these matters. Consider Mark Thompson. On November 12, Thompson took over as the president of the *New York Times* Company, following a trail of accusations that when he was BBC chief, he failed to report child rapist Jimmy Savile, the BBC icon who worked there for decades.

Thompson denies hearing of Savile's predatory behavior. Yet last September, his lawyers wrote a letter on his behalf threatening the London *Sunday Times* with a lawsuit if it ran a story implicating him in the Savile scandal.

Most astoundingly, he then claimed knowing nothing of the letter's contents! So when it comes to pointing fingers about a sexual cover-up, the *Times* should be the last to do so.

One of the most irresponsible critics of the Catholic Church on this matter is Judge Anne Burke. She is quoted by Goodstein as blaming every single cardinal for this problem. “They all have participated in one way or another in having actual information about criminal conduct, and not doing anything

about it.” Ideally, she should be sued for libel. But she knows that no cardinal is going to do that. So she continues to throw mud.

In 2006, Burke said priests aren’t entitled to constitutional rights, and should be removed from ministry on the basis of a single unsubstantiated accusation. Anticipating criticism, Burke said, “We understand that it is a violation of the priest’s due process—you’re innocent until proven guilty—but we’re talking about the most vulnerable people in our society and those are children.” But her alleged interest in child welfare didn’t allow her to say whether non-priests should be denied their civil liberties when accused of wrongdoing.

Goodstein likes to use Terry McKiernan’s name as a credible source. McKiernan is director of a website tracking abuse cases. At a 2011 SNAP conference, he said, without a shred of evidence, that New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan was “keeping the lid on 55 names” of predator priests. This is an out-and-out lie: Dolan isn’t covering for any priest.

If Dolan is guilty, then McKiernan himself should be willing to disclose the names of the 55 priests, but he refuses. This is typical of him. Like Burke, he has a different standard for accused priests: in 2011 he said they should be removed from

ministry before an accusation is even investigated. Not surprisingly, when the John Jay study was released, McKiernan condemned it the day before it was issued.

The last critic Goodstein cites is SNAP director David Clohessy. In the *New York Daily News*, he is quoted saying, “We’re trying to keep this issue front and center.” He needs to—he’s broke. On February 23, SNAP sent a desperate e-mail to its donors saying, “We are barely meeting our everyday expenses.”

One reason why SNAP is in bad shape is that Clohessy has had to come up with the big bucks to pay for lawyers after being

sued for refusing to turn over SNAP records about his allegedly shady operations. Although he demands transparency from the Church, Clohessy refuses to disclose his own funding sources (we know that much comes from Church-suing lawyers like Jeffrey Anderson). As dishonest as they come, Clohessy was asked before a Missouri court in 2011, "Has SNAP to your knowledge ever issued a press release that contained false information?" He didn't blink. "Sure."

For decades, Clohessy has thrown rhetorical bombs at the Church, arguing what a crime it is for anyone in the Church not to report a suspected molester. But when it comes to himself, it's a different story. In the 1990s, he knew about the predatory behavior of a molesting priest and never called the cops. That priest was his brother Kevin. This is no matter of conjecture—he's admitted it.

No one with any sense of dignity should ever seek to defend the behavior of a molester. It must also be said that when such a serious issue like this is being discussed, no one with any sense of dignity should make irresponsible charges or sweeping generalizations.

Unsubstantiated accusations aren't limited to the *Times*. Over the past several weeks, most of the big city newspapers have carried stories hurling wild accusations at the Catholic Church. Nor is the problem confined to the U.S.

On the eve of the conclave, two Australian newspapers, *The Age* and the *Sydney Morning Herald*, ran a story by Barney Zwartz indicting Cardinal George Pell, Archbishop of Sydney. It cited accusations by Dr. Paul Collins that Pell had "long [been] dogged" by charges of sexual abuse, thus disqualifying him as a serious papal candidate. This is a pernicious lie.

First of all, Collins is an ex-priest who resigned in 2001 after clashing with the Vatican; he has a long record of defending every dissident on a wide range of subjects. Second,

Pell was completely exonerated of allegations that he abused a teenager in the 1960s. Third, Zwartz knew Pell was innocent: in 2010, he wrote that “an independent investigation by a retired non-Catholic judge cleared him.” Fourth, for Zwartz to cite accusations made by SNAP, the wholly discredited so-called victims’ group, showed how irresponsible he is. Fifth, *CathNews*, a prominent Catholic Australian media outlet, picked up the trashy story and then had to apologize for making “unfair, false and seriously defamatory allegations against Cardinal Pell, who has worked hard to eradicate the evil of sexual abuse.”

All of this is despicable. Zwartz used an embittered ex-priest to slam Cardinal Pell, knowing full well he’d been cleared of all charges. Most distressing was the work of the Catholic media. This isn’t the first time Catholic dissidents masking as Catholic journalists have sundered the reputation of a high-ranking member of the Church, but it’s one of the most egregious. Pell was so angry he threatened to sue the culprits.

The problem with yellow journalism is that once a false story is disseminated, especially in this day and age of Internet bloggers and social media, it’s difficult to root out. Corrections are sometimes printed in newspapers, but are rarely posted by bloggers. In the case of the false stories about Catholic leaders, it’s almost impossible to correct the record: believing the worst rumors about Catholicism isn’t a hard sell these days.

In 1964, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *New York Times v. Sullivan* that public persons (those who are in the news), as opposed to private citizens, didn’t have the same rights for suing when their reputations were unfairly damaged. There’s a certain logic to this that’s commendable: how can there be a robust media when authors, writing about public persons, must extreme caution in what they say?

Under the ruling, people who believe they've been libeled must prove that those doing so knew what they said was inaccurate, and acted with malice. That's a high bar to clear, but it protects the reporter's right to free speech. It also plays into the hands of unscrupulous journalists who know they can get away with almost anything.

Is there more yellow journalism? Yes, but we shouldn't put too much emphasis on *Sullivan*. What explains the surge in unprofessionalism is found in our culture, not in law. Frankly, the politics of destruction—making ad hominem attacks designed to smear one's reputation—reflects our culture of radical individualism, a culture long on rights, but short on responsibilities. The social results aren't pretty.

It's important to understand the social context that gives rise to unsubstantiated accusations, but ultimately there's no excuse. The guilty know what they're doing, and they should be held accountable.

SPEAK OUT? OR SHUT UP?

No sooner had Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio been elected Pope Francis when the *Los Angeles Times* started reporting on his alleged "timidity" in fighting Argentina's dictatorship during the Dirty War, 1976 to 1983. The newspaper also cited the rap that he was "too quiet" during this period. Similarly, the *New York Times* is saying that the pope is being accused of "knowing about abuses and failing to do enough to stop them." What is particularly striking about today's front-page story on this issue—the pope "faces his own entanglement with the Dirty War"—is that it took four journalists in four different

nations to work on it.

Anyone who thinks these newspapers want a more vocal Catholic Church would be wrong: it totally depends on the issue.

For example, when Cardinal Timothy Dolan accepted the invitation to speak at the Republican National Convention (he also closed the Democratic National Convention with a prayer), the *Los Angeles Times* said he should not have accepted because “lending his presence” sent the wrong message; he should have allowed “a local and lower-profile cleric to do the honors.” Last year, right before the election, the same newspaper ran an editorial calling on the IRS to keep “politics out of the pulpit,” specifically citing as objectionable those bishops who spoke out against the Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate. Last year, the *New York Times* branded the Catholic response to the mandate “a dramatic stunt, full of indignation but built on air.” A month before the election, it accused leaders of the Catholic Church of “making inflammatory allegations” about the HHS edict.

So what do the *Los Angeles Times* and the *New York Times* want? They want the bishops to check in with them so they can decide whether the the Catholic Church should speak out or shut up. It is nothing short of amazing that these newspapers fail to see their own blatant inconsistencies. Either that, or they are more hopeless than we thought.

CRITICS OF POPE EMERGE

Pope Francis has captured the good will, indeed the love, of millions around the globe, and the response is hardly confined to Catholic circles. However, his critics are emerging, though none with any luck.

Sex is always a good subject for Catholic haters. Their goal—sex without consequences (kids and diseases)—is threatened when religious leaders counsel the virtue of restraint. Similarly, we have the lament of people like Mary Johnson, a former nun, who told the MSNBC audience how “marginalized” gay and lesbian Catholics are. Catholic-bashing lawyer Marci Hamilton chimed in, commenting about the “sex abuse scandal that has scandalized the church over the past decade.” Any high school fact checker knows better: the timeline of the homosexual scandal was the mid-60s to the mid-80s.

Washington Post opinion writer Eugene Robinson wants to know “what did the newly chosen Pope Francis do” about the right-wing dictatorship in Argentina’s “Dirty War”? We have an answer from Adolfo Perez Esquivel, the 1980 Nobel Peace Prize winner: he said the pope “was no accomplice of the dictatorship.” Indeed, he firmly concluded, “He can’t be accused of that.” Others have written books praising the pope for his yeoman efforts in undermining the junta. Miguel A. De La Torre, a professor at the School of Theology in Denver, condemned the pope for not changing “the social structure that creates poverty.” Guilty as charged. Nor did the pope cure insanity; if he did we would not be subjected to such crazy talk.

Sadly, more than a few evangelicals showed how insecure they were. Bethany Blankley was particularly incensed at Fox News anchor Megyn Kelly and Fox News executive editor John Moody for saying God was at work in selecting the pope. Of course He was. Too bad she never learned of the Holy Spirit in Sunday School.

A NUN FOR POPE?

MSNBC contributors E.J. Dionne and Katrina vanden Heuvel both said they wanted to see a nun named as the next pope. No they don't. They certainly wouldn't want Mother Agnes Mary Donovan of the Sisters of Life. Nor would they want Mother Mary Assumpta Long of the Dominican Sisters of Mary,

Mother of the Eucharist. The truth of the matter is this: they wouldn't want any of the nuns who belong to orders associated with the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious. (They'd be happy to stick with the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.)

That's because all of these women are faithful daughters of the Catholic Church. Quite unlike dissident nuns, these sisters accept the teachings of the Magisterium. Indeed, those who say they want a nun as pope would clearly prefer a cardinal who shares their views before they would ever want to see one of these nuns selected as pope. So why don't they just be honest about it?

NY TIMES HOSTS ANOTHER DISSIDENT CATHOLIC

Author Paul Elie was one of many dissident voices in the *New York Times* following Pope Benedict XVI's resignation. His parochialism allows him to assume all Catholics shared his discontent. "Resignation," he said, is "what American Catholics are feeling about our faith." He should speak for himself—most of us don't share his *Commonweal* affliction.

Elie has long predicted the Church's demise. Two decades ago he championed the voice of pro-abortion Catholic women. In 1994, after insisting that the laity were in "deep dissent" over such issues, he appeared positively dazed over the success of a best-selling book by Pope John Paul II.

Living in an intellectual ghetto has consequences. In 1999, Elie named eight prelates as possible successors to Cardinal John J. O'Connor. Bridgeport Bishop Edward Egan (not on Elie's list) got the job.

Elie advised all Catholics to skip church during Lent. He led the way, shunning his Oratory Church of St. Boniface. He threatened to attend services with Quakers, Episcopalians, Jews, Muslims, or Baptists. He's also threatened to enter a Zen monastery. Doesn't he know that his happy parish has weekly Zen Meditations?

Perhaps Elie might consider joining the New York City Wiccan Family Temple, which is currently welcoming new members. We're sure they would love to have him.

SALLY QUINN'S VOOODOO EXERCISE

A recent Sally Quinn piece in the *Washington Post* managed to be wrong on just about every level, beginning with the Church's "child sexual abuse scandal." The scandal didn't involve children—less than 5% of victims were prepubescent. Typical offenses involved "inappropriate touching" of postpubescent males. It was a homosexual scandal that ended a quarter century ago: the number of credibly accused priests over the last decade has averaged in the single digits, among a population of over 40,000. No religious or secular group can match that number.

Both as a cardinal and as pope, Benedict XVI made it harder for practicing homosexuals to enter the priesthood, the result being a sharp decline in abuse. The guilty are now either dead or laicized.

If the Catholic Church were really anti-women, as Quinn claims, then why is it that women occupy the vast majority of leadership positions in the Church?.

Furthermore, Colm Toibin's *The Testament of Mary* is fiction. Why cite it as evidence for anything? And Garry Wills is no "devout Catholic;" he's no longer Catholic. He recently said he doesn't believe in the Eucharist. End of story.

Quinn told her parents she was an atheist at thirteen. Speaking of her upbringing, she says, "What we really believed in and practiced was voodoo, psychic phenomenon, Scottish mysticism, palm reading, astrology, séances, and ghosts." Sounds like the voodoo really took a toll on her.

NY TIMES HOSTS EX-CATHOLIC THEOLOGIAN

In the *New York Times*, Hans Küng, an embittered ex-Catholic theologian, criticized Pope Benedict XVI for having irritated "the Protestant churches, Jews, Muslims, the Indians of Latin America, women, reform-minded theologians and all pro-reform Catholics." Küng blames then-Cardinal Ratzinger for hiding abuse cases, and cites "Vatileaks" as a problem. He claims two of the major scandals of Benedict XVI's pontificate were to give "recognition" to the "Society of St. Pius X, which is bitterly opposed to the Second Vatican Council, as well as of a Holocaust denier, Bishop Richard Williamson."

While some Protestant churches resented Benedict welcoming Anglicans into the Church; Küng overlooks the fact that they lobbied hard to join. Jews have warmly embraced the pope, though some were unhappy when the Latin Mass was being promoted. But as Rabbi Brad Hirschfield recently said, "It is unfair to complain about a text, which has its own parallels in Jewish liturgy...." Yes, there were Muslims who misunderstood the pope's 2006 speech when he warned against severing the link between faith and reason; rioting and murder followed, unwittingly proving his point. In 2007, the pope didn't win the plaudits of some Brazilian Indians when he criticized "the utopia of going back to breathe life into the pre-Columbus religions," but he won points for being honest. Catholic women have embraced the pope, except those sharing the dissident views of "reformers."

No one did a better job of rooting out the homosexual predators than Cardinal Ratzinger, and "Vatileaks" is a joke—every institution has leakers. The Society of St. Pius X hasn't returned to full communion with Rome, and Bishop Williamson has been expelled. Didn't Küng want the Vatican to go soft on dissidents?