

QUINNIPIAC POLLSTERS MISLED THE PUBLIC

In a survey of American Catholic opinion, the Quinnipiac University Polling Institute intentionally misled the public by claiming that Catholics led “American voters toward support for same-sex marriage.” But Catholic League president Dr. William Donohue showed that a closer examination of the survey showed differently, forcing Assistant Director Peter Brown to admit his claims were incorrect.

Brown claimed Catholics supported same-sex marriage by a margin of 54-38 percent (the national figures are 47-43 percent). Dr. Donohue noted that the sample size of Catholics was only 497, with a margin of error of plus or minus four percent, hardly an adequate number to be seen as completely representative.

Catholics were asked 14 questions, with responses broken down on the basis of church attendance. But Dr. Donohue noted that the poll didn’t disaggregate data regarding same-sex marriage on the basis of church attendance.

Quinnipiac’s widely discussed “finding” was based on misleading data, with Dr. Donohue pointing out that four out of ten Catholics sampled don’t practice their religion (28% go to church a “few times a year”; 11% said they “never” attend). That nominal Catholics would support gay marriage is certain, but the poll failed to highlight this.

In truth, 55% of regular church-going Catholics oppose gay marriage. Only 38% percent favor it. Brown’s claim is sheer nonsense.

When the Catholic League issued a press release addressing this, Catholic News Agency contacted Brown, who claimed, “we only have so much space, and can only do so many things up

front.” Still, he found enough space to record the difference between practicing and nominal Catholics on whether the next pope should be American or not, along with other issues

Even after admitting it misled the public, Quinnipiac hasn’t set the record straight on its website. Its credibility as a serious survey house, therefore, has thus been compromised.

NEW YORK TIMES SURVEY OF CATHOLICS

It’s debatable whether someone who admits attending Mass only “a few times a year or never” can be considered Catholic, but their responses make interesting reading compared with those who “attend Mass weekly.”

The majority of weekly attendees supported Pope Benedict; only a quarter of those rarely attending did so. While 72% of weekly attendees closely followed recent news stories, only 35% of those rarely attending did. The majority of weekly church-goers wanted Benedict’s successor to continue his teachings or adopt more conservative ones. Among the latter, only 20% agreed (66% wanted more liberal teachings).

Weekly attendees considered the healthcare insurance debate a religious liberty issue, but nominal Catholics called it a matter of women’s health. Regular church-goers wanted the next pope to oppose abortion (70%) and the death penalty (67%), but the figures for lax Catholics are 45% and 50% respectively. Basically, they’re more inclined to oppose the death penalty for a convicted murderer than the killing of innocents!

Surveys about celibacy, women’s ordination, and birth control

have long found that most Catholics, including practicing ones, are open to change. In 1995, the Catholic League commissioned a survey on these issues. One question yielded a fascinating outcome: “If the Catholic church did not change its positions as many have suggested, how would that affect your commitment to the church?” An astonishing 83% said they’d be just as committed, if not more so (for weekly attendees the figure was 90%).

Basically, while most Catholics are ok with making some changes, they value more highly the continuity of settled Church teachings.

INADEQUATE SURVEYS

The larger the sample size of any population, the more costly the survey, but the more accurate the findings. Catholics make up anywhere between 70 and 78 million Americans, but even a sample of 1,500 can yield relatively accurate results (the margin of error in such a survey would generally be 3 percentage points). Two recently published surveys of Catholics didn’t even come close to this baseline sample. For example, the *New York Times* recently ran a poll that sampled some 580 Catholics; it had a 4 percentage point margin of error. In addition, the Pew Research Center sampled 184 Catholics, allowing a margin of error of 8.2 percentage points.

Such samples are inadequate. By contrast, a Rasmussen poll of Catholics published last month had a sample size of 1,000; the margin of error was 3 percentage points. Ten days ago, Gallup did a survey of just Hispanic Catholics, and had a sample size of 28,607; its margin of error was only 1 percentage point.

There are lots of problems with even the best surveys, but when the sample size is ridiculously small, the findings cannot be taken seriously.

STEWART GETS INTO THE GUTTER AGAIN

On a recent “Daily Show” episode, Jon Stewart once again showed his anti-Catholic bigotry for all to see. What started off with jabs against the cardinals and their chances of election quickly got uglier as a “Vatican Correspondent” referred to Communion as a “cracker and juice ceremony.”

The segment continued its descent into the gutter with a vicious “report” on the Conclave that was full of double entendre; Stewart’s “Senior Vatican Correspondent” Samantha Bee likened the papal election process to the stages of sexual abuse.

Bee called the gathering of cardinals a “grope,” who took part in a “molestation,” which she claimed was the “liturgical name” of the voting process. That process, Bee said, was not complete until the cardinals reached a “fellatio,” (an “oral consensus”) culminating in “white smoke rising from the chimney.” When Stewart asked Bee if that was called an “ejaculation,” she mockingly responded with the word’s authentic definition, a short prayer.

Stewart’s return to the gutter was of no surprise, but perhaps he should get his facts straight about the homosexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church: it ended almost three decades ago. If he wanted to be current, he would rip on the sexual abuse taking place in Brooklyn’s ultra-Orthodox Jewish

community. But no, he saves his vitriol for Catholics.

HBO'S PLEPLER NEEDS TO MOVE ON MAHER

Richard Plepler is the CEO of HBO, and the Catholic League's dealings with him in the past have been cordial and professional. But he has obviously allowed Bill Maher to continue expounding his anti-Catholic rants with impunity. Here is a sample of what Maher said on a recent episode:

- The pope and the cardinals are known to stick together “when you’re molesting kids.”
- “I kid the cardinals. They chipped in. They got him a t-shirt that said, ‘I’m not retiring. I’m being put out to stud.’”
- According to Maher, the pope “said there were moments where it seemed like the Lord was sleeping. Wow! Sleeping. Or like the kids at Catholic summer camp—pretending to be asleep perhaps.”

The question for Plepler is simple: are there no lines that Maher can cross before he is finally reined in? Are we to believe that no one at HBO has any say over his vicious rants against the Church? If it were some other segment of the population that was being trashed over and over again, are we to understand that absolutely nothing would be done about it?

Catholic League president Bill Donohue has had a cordial relationship with Richard Plepler for many years, even though they don’t always see eye to eye. Recently Donohue wrote Plepler a letter asking just how far he was prepared to let Maher go in pushing the envelope. Although Plepler didn’t reply to Donohue’s letter, for the next few weeks Bill Maher

ceased his vicious attacks on the pope.

ANDREW SULLIVAN SMEARS POPE AGAIN

Andrew Sullivan has once again accused retired Pope Benedict XVI of being a homosexual. His evidence? The pope's "handsome male companion [Archbishop Georg Ganswein] will continue to live with him, while working for the other Pope during the day." Sullivan asks, "Are we supposed to think that's, well, a normal arrangement?"

Speaking about normal is hardly normal for Sullivan, who in 2001 solicited anal sex with anonymous men by posting a picture of his torso on the Internet. He explicitly requested men who didn't wear condoms, begging for orgies. Unfortunately for him, he was outed by his boyfriends after they recognized it was his body.

The media were all abuzz about Sullivan's latest charge, which is really nothing new. In 2010, he wrote, "it seems pretty obvious to me...that the current Pope is a gay man." He cited what he called "the Pope's mental architecture," alleging his "prissy fastidiousness, the effeminate voice...the over-the-top clothing accessories," etc. Seems like Sullivan employs gay stereotypes when it suits him. But if the pope were truly gay, why no prototypical gay lisp? Nor has anyone ever accused him of being a narcissist, another trait associated with homosexuals.

It's not hard to explain why Sullivan has smeared Benedict again. Recently he wrote, "Evil remains at the heart of the Vatican." If he believes that, then it is easy to demonize the

former pope.

We don't know enough about Sullivan's own "mental architecture" to explain why his intrinsic disorder manifests itself in such a vile way. That it does is beyond dispute.

CANADIAN ATHEISTS RIP MOTHER TERESA

In the Canadian journal, *Studies in Religion*, Serge Larivée et al attacked Mother Teresa in a rehash of Christopher Hitchens' book *The Missionary Position*. No one was cited more in this new article. Not surprisingly, Larivée is a devout atheist, along with at least one co-author.

The authors berated Mother Teresa's "rather dubious way of caring for the sick, her questionable political contacts, her suspicious management of enormous sums of money she received, and her overly dogmatic views regarding, in particular, abortion, contraception, and divorce."

Atheists have no reference base to assess someone who comforts the dying. That's why Mother Teresa perplexes them (they rely on euthanasia). They can't liken the terminally ill to "Christ on the cross." Her contacts with dictators like Haiti's Duvalier gave her access to the sick and dying. While she did take money from the rich, her clients were delighted she did so. And she certainly was dogmatic in her crusade to defend the civil rights of innocent unborn children.

The authors attacked Catholic League president Dr. William Donohue for lacing Hitchens, whose book he called "a 98 page essay printed on eight-and-a-half by five-and-a-half inch

paper,” with “no footnotes, no citations of any kind.” For “scholars” to rely so heavily on an undocumented work speaks volumes (Donohue told Hitchens that as a professor he’d give him an “F”).

What drives these atheists to hate Mother Teresa so much is her altruism. The news release touting the article claimed it aimed to dispel the “myth of altruism” surrounding her. They have failed. Furthermore, on four occasions the release spelled her name “Theresa.” News Flash: there’s no “h” in her name. So much for accuracy, as well as credibility.

COLLEGE MALES PLAY “KILL THE BABY”

Recently some young men at Hunter College played a game mocking abortion. They stuffed balloons under their shirts, pretending to be pregnant, and then used plastic forks and knives on each other to pop the balloons. Students yelled, “Kill that baby! Kill it!”

At least they were honest: pregnant women aren’t carrying blobs of cells—they’re carrying a human being. Notice the guys didn’t scream “Kill that fetus.” “Kill that baby” makes so much more sense. Which is why it just rolled off their lips.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique*. The book launched the feminist movement, a byproduct of which was legalized abortion. Every survey on abortion rights shows that no group is more enthusiastic about a young woman’s “right to choose” than young men. That’s certainly not what Friedan intended.

Had feminists considered this subject more clearly, they would have realized that legalizing abortion turned out to be a boon to millions of selfish, exploitative young men. Just like those at Hunter.

HYPOCRITES AT THE ONION

During this year's Oscars, *The Onion* made an comment on its Twitter account about actress Quvenzhané Wallis, using an obscenity to refer to the 9-year-old girl. After fielding a ton of complaints, Greg Hughes, who issued the tweet, finally admitted that his remarks were "crude and offensive," saying that no one "should be subjected to such a senseless, humorless comment masquerading as satire." Steve Hannah, *The Onion's* CEO, stated, "we are taking immediate steps to discipline those individuals responsible." He then apologized directly to Miss Wallis.

The only reason Hughes and Hannah apologized to her was that liberal Hollywood criticized them for trashing a minority girl. Had they any real standards of civility or decency, they surely would not have printed a vile piece about now-retired Pope Benedict XVI on December 13.

The article in question claimed that the pope gave permission to make a pornographic film on Vatican grounds. (Because this is a family publication, we don't think it proper to quote the article directly). Clearly the article was geared purely for shock value. The alleged film it described was said to feature just about every type of sexual deviancy imaginable. If that weren't enough, it mocked not only the sacrament of confession, but even the confessional itself. We're also told that a crucifix was used for purposes that can only be

described as blasphemous. In addition, both Mary and the Immaculate Conception are tastelessly mocked. Sacrilege doesn't even begin to cover half of what this article contains.

It's pretty clear that *The Onion* has no standards regarding "crude and offensive" work when it comes to Catholics or the beliefs they hold most dear. Nor does it discipline those making hideously vulgar remarks about the Catholic Church. But of course, as might be expected, it bows to the protected classes.

MASTURBATION SESSIONS HOSTED IN CHAPEL

Recently Catholic League President Dr. William A. Donohue contacted Allegheney College president, Dr. James H. Mullen, Jr.:

Last night, two sexperts arrived on your campus to teach students how to masturbate. Women were told that by "inserting a finger or fingers inside the vagina into the front wall of the body" they will experience orgasm. "If you've got a vagina, your genitals are tucked pretty neatly inside your body. It's a pretty handy place to keep one's genitals, really." Such words of wisdom do not come cheaply: tuition is over \$37,000.

Not surprisingly, this exercise in "academic excellence" was sponsored by the pro-abortion advocates (Reproductive Health Coalition) and the homosexual activists (Queers and Allies). None of this really concerns me, but what does interest me is the venue: Ford Memorial Chapel.

The Shafer Auditorium could have been used. So could have the Black Theatre, Quigley 101, Schultz Hall, or the Tillotson Room. There are 13 board rooms on campus, as well as classrooms, conference rooms and computer labs. So I am curious as to why a Christian chapel, which hosts Catholic Masses, was the selected site. You also have a Jewish Community Center and a place for Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu students (the Prayer and Meditation Retreat). Why weren't they chosen? And why was this event selected to take place in a chapel during Lent?

I'd appreciate hearing your thoughts on this matter. Just do me the favor of not invoking academic freedom—that is not the issue. I think you know what is.

Although Mullen did not reply to Donohue directly, he did tell the media that he disagreed with the venue for his forum.