

VACUOUS REPORT ON ABUSE ISSUED

It would be hard to find a more vacuous document on the subject of clergy sexual abuse than the one released by the Leadership Roundtable; it was based on a summit held prior to the February Vatican meeting on this subject.

The most serious flaw in the report was the refusal to address the reasons why priestly sexual abuse occurs.

It was encouraging to read on p. 4 a section that addresses the "Twin Crises of Abuse and Leadership Failures." Just as encouraging was a section on p. 5 that discusses the "Root Causes" of these problems.

Regrettably, *absolutely nothing in the report even attempts to examine the root causes of sexual abuse*; only leadership failures are noted.

Yet on p. 4 it admits that "there are twin crises that need twin solutions." True. The scandal involves two parties: the enabling bishop and the molesting priest. Why didn't anyone associated with this report bother to question why only the former is discussed?

Three cardinals, Blase Cupich of Chicago, Joseph Tobin of Newark, and Sean O'Malley of Boston, participated in the summit. Surely someone, if not them, should have seen the gaping hole in this report.

The report follows the establishment-talking point, adopted by Rome, that puts the entire blame on the bishops, thus avoiding a discussion of the priest who acted out. This explains why clericalism is mentioned twelve times; there is no mention of gays or homosexuality.

Whatever role clericalism may have played with some bishops, it is of no explanatory value accounting for why a priest molested a postpubescent male. And since this describes 80 percent of the cases, why was there no discussion of the role played by homosexual priests?

Just as was true in the Vatican summit, there is a reluctance to come to grips with the overwhelming role played by homosexual priests in the sexual abuse scandal.

What do those associated with this report think Pope Francis meant when he took up the issue of a “gay lobby” in the Church?

What do they think Father Donald Cozzens meant when he said the priesthood risks becoming a “gay profession”?

What do they think Father Richard McBrien meant when he spoke about the “gay culture” in the Church?

What do they think Father Andrew Greeley meant when he wrote about the “Lavender Mafia” in the Church?

None of these men are known as die-hard conservatives. If they were honest enough to discuss the obvious, why aren’t those at the Leadership Roundtable?

CLOSURE FOR COVINGTON CATHOLIC

The innocent students at Covington Catholic High School have finally achieved closure. An investigative report, conducted by a private detective agency commissioned by the Diocese of Covington, has exonerated the students. Four investigators

interviewed dozens of students and chaperones, and watched hundreds of hours of videos.

Just as we have been saying from the get-go, none of the students did anything wrong. They have been completely exonerated.

Indeed, Covington Bishop Roger J. Foys, who initially criticized the students before learning of new evidence from a second video, commended the boys, saying, "We should not have allowed ourselves to be bullied and pressured into making a statement prematurely."

It is worth recalling the invidious stereotypes that were quickly advanced by critics of the students. Not all the unfair critics were anti-Catholic bigots—some were Catholics who got sucked into this mad rush to judgment; some of them were also guilty of harboring stereotypes.

Here is a list of the most commonly cited false charges against the students:

- The fact that Covington was Catholic was cited by anti-Catholic bigots who argued that Catholic teaching was responsible for their hatred.
- White privilege was mentioned by self-hating whites as a causative factor that explained the students' racism.
- Charges that the boys screamed "build that wall" at the Indian instigator were made by knee-jerk bullies—the investigation proves that no student chanted this refrain.
- Pro-abortion fanatics blamed the March for Life for having the Covington Catholic students participate.
- Violence against Nick Sandmann, the student who stood his ground against the Indian agitator, was encouraged by peaceniks.
- MAGA (Make America Great Again) hats worn by some of the students were seized upon by Trump haters as proof of their bigotry and intolerance.

- White racists, who always see Indians as victims and whites as victimizers, called the students racists. For the same reason, they also refused to condemn the black thugs who made many bigoted remarks.

Sandmann has filed a lawsuit against many public persons who defamed him. We wish him well.

MORE RIGHTS FOR THE SEXUALLY CONFUSED?

The Equality Act has been around for decades, under various names, but it always fails. It will again this year, even if it clears the House; Rep. Nancy Pelosi, the House Speaker, has said the legislation is a priority for the new Congress. If most Americans knew what it is really about, they would not support it.

This bill is not about equality—it is about trashing the free exercise of religion as guaranteed by the First Amendment. In effect, it would gut the constitutionally sound practice of awarding religious exemptions whenever there is a conflict between religious expression and the rights of homosexuals and the sexually confused (e.g., a man who thinks he is a woman, and vice versa).

The Equality Act has two major goals: (a) it would amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to ban discrimination against homosexuals and the sexually confused, and (b) it would undermine the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) of 1993 by allowing gay rights to trump religious rights.

The predicate of this legislation is that sexual orientation

and gender identity are analogous to race and ethnicity, and are therefore deserving of the same protections afforded by the Civil Rights Act. However, that is based on a false assumption.

Sexual orientation speaks to behavior, and gender identity, in this context, refers to the sexually confused; by contrast, neither race nor ethnicity are a function of volition.

While no one can justify unequal treatment on the basis of ascribed characteristics such as race and ethnicity, justifying disparate treatment on the basis of achieved characteristics such as sexual orientation and gender identity can be justified in some instances.

For example, religiously devout parents may rightly object to having their children counseled by a woman who has acquired male genitalia. In normal times, this would not be controversial. Sadly, we live in abnormal times.

There is one very important aspect of the Equality Act that has been generally ignored, even by its critics: It would mean that homosexuals and the sexually confused would qualify for affirmative action.

Of course, the Equality Act says nothing of the kind. It is deceptive. In fact, it pulls the affirmative action trigger.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act explicitly prohibited preferential treatment on the basis of race. But administrative agencies and the courts did not interpret it that way, and instead saw it as a vehicle for affirmative action.

Hence, if African Americans qualify for preferential treatment because of the way the Civil Rights Act has been interpreted, then there is no stopping homosexuals and the sexually confused from qualifying were the Equality Act to pass.

This would mean that an employer who is a practicing Catholic, evangelical Christian, observant Jew, Muslim, or Mormon, would be expected to give preferential treatment to homosexuals and the sexually confused (save for small businessmen) when hiring.

We cannot allow the Pelosi rule—pass the bill and then we'll figure out what it means—to be operative. We already know what it would lead to, and that is not something most Americans would ever support.

CUOMO CAN'T DEFEND HIS ABORTION LAW

Exactly three weeks after New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed his abortion law, which allows non-physicians to perform abortions up until the baby is born—and provides no criminal penalties for infanticide—he met with President Donald Trump. According to the White House, Trump “raised his concerns to Governor Cuomo about Democrats’ support of late-term abortions.”

When Cuomo was asked about this, he blamed Trump for promoting “division.”

In other words, Cuomo, who lit up the sky of New York in pink to celebrate killing children in and out of the womb, was totally unable to defend his barbaric law. If he had any guts, he would have told the president why it is important to praise his bloody law.

Perhaps most important, Cuomo is factually wrong to say that discussing his bill is divisive. There is nothing divisive

about it. Every survey ever taken shows that the public has no stomach for late-term abortions, never mind infanticide. Even those who identify as pro-choice cannot stomach Cuomo's law. So who's left? What a class group of people they must be.

This is the biggest mistake Cuomo has ever made. He will never get over it, and neither will those Democrats who agree with him. One does not have to be a conservative to figure this out: CNN's editor-at-large, Chris Cillizza, did in a post titled, "How Democrats are Handing Donald Trump a Viable Path to a Second Term."

KAMALA HARRIS OPINES ON LIFE AND DEATH

Recently, Sen. Kamala Harris was asked by National Public Radio (NPR) about her position on the death penalty. She is against it. When pushed further, she stuck to her guns.

NPR: "For any crime?"

Harris: "Correct."

NPR: "Not even, I don't know, treason?"

Harris: "Not in the United States, no."

NPR: "There's nothing that rises to that level?"

Harris: "Not in the United States, no."

Last year, Harris addressed the issue of aborting a child right up until birth. Here is what she tweeted on January 29, 2018:

“Tonight, the Senate is voting on whether to impose a 20-week abortion ban. Women have the constitutional right to make their own decisions about their reproductive health. It shouldn’t be infringed upon. Get out your bullhorns. Everyone should be shouting about this.”

There we have it. Harris says that those who endanger the safety of all Americans by attempting a violent overthrow of the government, or spying on the military for a foreign enemy, should have their lives spared, but innocent children who are moments from being born are not entitled to have their lives spared.

Harris is a declared candidate for president of the United States.

CHURCH NEEDS MORE MASCULINE PRIESTS

The assault on masculinity has been going on inside and outside of the Catholic Church for decades, but it is now at a fever pitch. To cite one recent example, in his February 21 article, *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof blamed masculinity for the sexual abuse scandals in the Catholic and Southern Baptist Churches. The Southern Baptist Convention was recently investigated by reporters.

Kristof quotes Serene Jones, president of the Union Theological Society: “They [the two Churches] both have very masculine understandings of God, and have a structure where men are considered the closest representatives of God.”

This remarkable comment deserves a serious rejoinder. But

first a word on why the Southern Baptists were targeted and why Kristof interviewed Jones.

Why did the Houston Chronicle and the *San Antonio Express-News* investigate the Southern Baptist Convention? There are several other Baptist denominations, so why the Southern Baptists? Alternatively, why didn't they choose to probe the Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, or Presbyterians?

Let's take a wild guess. It's for the same reason the media, until now, have focused *exclusively* on the Catholic Church: both Churches are known for their orthodox Christian teachings on sexuality. If they can be discredited, their moral voice will be compromised. One would have to be ideologically blind not to see what's going on.

Why did Kristof tee it up for the president of the Union Theological Seminary? Because he knew she would feed his narrative. This New York-based institution has long been home to "progressive" thinkers, including dissident Catholic theologians (it has even employed those who have been banned from teaching at Catholic colleges due to their wholesale rejection of Catholicism).

More substantively, Kristof's thesis—masculinity is related to sexual abuse—is so spurious that even he admits to its flaw.

For starters, he summarizes his argument by citing the Catholic Church's male clergy and the "submissive" role occupied by females, but then a light goes off in his head. If this is the case, he wonders, then why haven't most of the victims in the Catholic Church been women and girls?

Here is how he puts it. "It's complicated, of course, for many of the Catholic victims were boys...." Actually, there is nothing complicated about it—he is simply wrong. Masculine priests, those who are naturally attracted to females, account for very little of the sexual abuse.

Kristof can't even get this little bit right. The vast majority, 81 percent, of the victims were male. That's not "many"—it's most. And they were not boys: 78 percent were postpubescent; adolescents are properly regarded as young men. But to admit this is to admit that homosexual priests are responsible for the lion's share of the abuse. And no one at the *New York Times* is going to admit to this verity.

The Catholic Church needs more masculine priests, not fewer. To put it differently, though matters are better today, for many years the Church had too many priests who were either effeminate or sexually immature. We've seen where that got us.

WASHINGTON POST GETS IT WRONG ON ABUSE

No one can fault the *Washington Post* for criticizing the Vatican summit on clergy abuse for being short on concrete prescriptions for reform. That much is true. But at the end of the February 27 editorial it made two accusations that are simply not true, and one that is misleading.

The editorial took the Church to task for its "steadfast opposition to changes in state laws that prohibit survivors of pedophile priests from filing lawsuits years after the abuse took place," citing the Church's "unique history as a haven for abusers."

The misleading comment is the remark about the Church opposing changes in state laws that allow for prosecuting old cases. In virtually every instance where this has happened, those state laws have exempted the public sector.

In other words, state laws that allow for a “look back” provision *almost never* apply to students raped by public school teachers: those students have only 90 days to file a complaint. This is because of the antiquated doctrine of sovereign immunity. When the law applies equally to the public sector, there is no Catholic opposition, as recently evidenced in New York.

Thus, the editorial unfairly characterized the Church’s opposition. Would not the *Washington Post* condemn a state law that allowed for a “look back” provision for students abused in the public schools but did not apply to private [read: Catholic] ones? Moreover, would the editorial page blast the public school establishment for opposing such a law on the basis of selective enforcement?

One of the two errors in the editorial, “Fine Words, Flimsy Deeds,” was the reference to “pedophile priests.” It is a fiction to charge that the Catholic Church has a pedophile problem. More than 19 of 20 accused clergy members *are not pedophiles*. Most of them—8 in 10—are homosexuals. This cover up by the editorial page is unconscionable.

Finally, there is zero evidence that the Church has a “unique history as a haven for abusers.” No institution has a unique history of harboring abusers, but if there is one that leads the way it surely is the family—that’s where most of the abuse takes place—followed by the public schools.

The *Washington Post* needs to get up to speed with these issues before lecturing the Catholic Church. We don’t own this problem, and we never did. It’s about time they admitted this verity.

CARDINAL PELL'S APPEAL IS JUSTIFIED

Australian Cardinal George Pell was convicted in December of molesting two choirboys in the 1990s, but it was not until February 25 that the details were disclosed; charges against Pell that would require a second trial over other allegations were dropped. Pell's lawyers are appealing the conviction.

There are many holes in the story that led to Pell's conviction. To begin with, one of the boys who was alleged to have registered a complaint overdosed on drugs and died. More important, the boy's mother said her son admitted, on two occasions, that Pell never abused him. This does not matter to the boy's father: He says he is going to sue the Church or Pell once the appeal is resolved. Let him. And let him sue his wife for libeling their son.

Regarding the other boy, the sole complainant, he said that Pell made him perform oral sex on him after saying Mass at Melbourne's St. Patrick's Cathedral two decades ago. Donohue has already written extensively about this, so we will not repeat it here.

However, we will offer a good summary of what this one boy alleges to have happened. The quoted parts are taken from a well-researched news story published by Rod McGuirk of the Associated Press; he writes from Melbourne.

"The jury convicted Pell of abusing two boys whom he had caught swigging sacramental wine in a rear room of Melbourne's St. Patrick's Cathedral in late 1996, as hundreds of worshippers were streaming out of Sunday services.

"[Robert] Richter, his lawyer, had told the jury that only a 'mad man' would take the risk of abusing boys in such a public place. He said it was 'laughable' that Pell would have been

able to expose his penis and force the victim to take it in his mouth, given the cumbersome robes he was wearing.

“The jury was handed the actual cumbersome robes Pell wore as archbishop. Over his regular clothes, Pell would wear a full-length white robe called an alb that was tied around his waist with a rope-like cincture. Over that, he would drape a 3-meter (10-foot) band of cloth called a stole around his neck. The outermost garment was the long poncho-like chasuble.

“More than 20 witnesses, including clerics, choristers and altar servers, testified during the trial. None recalled ever seeing the complainant and the other victim break from a procession of choristers, altar servers and clerics to go to the back room.

“The complainant testified that he and his friend had run from the procession and back into the cathedral through a side door to, as [Mark] Gibson, the prosecutor, said, ‘have some fun.’

“Monsignor Charles Portelli, who was the cathedral’s master of ceremonies in the 1990s, testified that he was always with Pell after Mass to help him disrobe in the sacristy.” He maintains the charges are totally false.

In other words, one of the alleged victims says he was never a victim, and the other can find no one—not one among over 20 who were with him that day—to support his story.

Keep Cardinal George Pell in your prayers. It is not easy for any priest, never mind a high-ranking one, to get a fair trial today. The hysteria and the animus that exist makes for a toxic environment.

SOME CATHOLICS QUESTION THEIR STATUS

A recent Gallup survey shows that news stories about clergy sexual abuse have Catholics questioning their affiliation with the Church. Before examining why, an analysis of the data is warranted; it reveals a nuanced portrait of Catholics.

The survey found that 37% of Catholics said they are questioning whether to remain in the Church; the figure in 2002 was 22%. Who are these Catholics? Most of them seldom or never go to church: 46% of these Catholics are questioning whether to remain versus 22% of those who attend church weekly. In other words, those with one foot out the door are more likely to consider exiting, which is precisely what we would expect.

A more interesting picture emerges when Catholics are asked how much confidence they have in the priests in their parish versus priests in general. Six in ten have confidence in their own priests (41% said “a great deal” and 18% said “quite a lot”) versus only a third for priests nationwide (20% said “a great deal” and 12% “quite a lot”). The figures for the bishops are similar to the latter.

Not surprisingly, Catholics who are regular attendees have a great deal of confidence in their priests, sporting a figure of 86%; but only 39% of those who seldom or never attend church feel this way. Most of the latter probably wouldn't be able to name the priests in their parish.

The difference between Church-goers and lapsed Catholics is most revealing when considering the second bank of questions. There is a reason why Church-goers have a lot of confidence in their priests: though it was not mentioned in the survey or in the concluding analysis, *almost all priests have never had an*

accusation made against them.

Thus, the everyday experience that Catholics who are regular church-goers have is a positive one—they and their priests are untouched by the scandal. But they read a lot about other priests, clergymen they do not know, and that explains the big drop in confidence for priests nationwide.

What Catholics are reading, of course, matters. For example, most of the news stories on the recent Vatican summit left the impression that the sexual abuse scandal is ongoing. It is not. It is certainly not true in the United States: most of the offenses that took place were in the last century.

The fact is there are many foes of the Church, and Catholic dissidents, *who don't want the scandal to end*. Their goal is to keep it alive so they can push for their secular reforms.