

JUSTICE IN OKLAHOMA; SOLDIER'S RIGHTS RESTORED

Within hours of registering a formal complaint with the top Army brass at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, a female Catholic soldier's rights were restored. More important, reforms were immediately put into place guaranteeing the religious liberty rights of Catholics on the base.

After learning that a female soldier enrolled in Advanced Individual Training at the base had thrice been denied the opportunity to go to Mass on Sundays, Bill Donohue wrote to Major General Mark McDonald at Fort Sill's U.S. Army Fires Center of Excellence.

Donohue noted that the "battle buddy" system they have requires soldiers to travel in pairs. He conceded that this arrangement surely has its merits, but he hastened to say that "it is not an adequate defense to deny someone her constitutional rights simply because there are no other Catholics in her unit." He added that a cadre escort "would resolve this matter, while not doing anything to undermine the policy of moving about in pairs."

The Catholic League president personalized his concerns. "I am a veteran of the U.S. Air Force, and have nothing but respect for the men and women of the armed services. But I am also the president of the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization, and as such, I take anti-Catholicism very seriously, regardless of the motive of the offender."

Donohue called for an investigation into this matter. He was pleased when he received an e-mail indicating that his complaint was being taken seriously. Donohue then called the base and spoke to the official who had contacted him. The conversation was amicable, and it resulted in assurances that

a cadre escort service would be arranged for those soldiers who lacked a fellow Catholic to “buddy” with. Case closed.

The reason we jumped on this issue transcended the incident at Fort Sill. There is an attack on the religious liberty rights of Catholics and Protestants in the armed forces, and in the military academies. Militant atheists are driving it, and obsequious officers are yielding to the pressure. We refuse to do so.

The goal is to censor religious expression in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and the Coast Guard, as well as on the campuses of the academies. The stakes are high: If the professional atheists can win there, they can win anywhere. This isn't about fidelity to the First Amendment—it's about trampling on it. Atheists are not being persecuted by the faithful; it's the other way around.

We are happy that this incident ended quickly and fairly.

BEATING BACK SCROOGE

The Catholic League's enormous Times Square billboard ([click here](#)) sends a message that is both joyful and serious: Christians will not allow the Scrooges in our society to stop us from honoring Jesus.

Scrooges are trying to censor Christmas again. In Bordentown, New Jersey the superintendent of schools initially sought to ban religious Christmas music from school concerts. Following an outcry from parents, and the intervention of the Alliance Defending Freedom, the decision was reversed. The same issue arose in Wisconsin's Wausau West High School, but sanity ultimately prevailed there, too.

In College Park, Georgia parents were told that at a charter school, all religious songs were prohibited. The educators proved their lameness when they allowed Feliz Navidad to be sung: if the kids can sing “Merry Christmas,” what do the administrators think they are celebrating?

A South Carolina charter school went so far as to cancel the annual toy drive because atheists said it would convert kids to Christianity. They’re worried about that—it’s not something a free society can tolerate.

Leading the anti-Christmas wars are American Atheists, Freedom From Religion Foundation and the American Humanist Association. These groups are driven by bigotry, not the Constitution. Unfortunately, there is a lot of ignorance among school officials about what is permissible and what is not.

The Catholic League will proudly display its billboard, and will erect a life-size nativity scene in Central Park. Scrooge won’t beat us.

CHRISTMAS WITHOUT CHRIST

William A. Donohue

Even though roughly 80 percent of Americans are Christian, 96 percent celebrate Christmas. Can non-Christians and non-believers really celebrate Christmas? To some extent they can, just the same way those who are not Irish can celebrate St. Patrick’s Day: they can partake in the fun aspects of it, but that’s it. At bottom, it’s a hollow exercise.

Multicultural propaganda maintains that the U.S. is so incredibly diverse that it is wrong to exclude non-Christians

at Christmastime. But no one is excluding them: it is Christians who are being excluded—they are the ones being denied their right to celebrate Christmas in the schools, public parks and the workplace. That these exclusionary policies are being invoked in the name of inclusion is the ultimate irony.

Diversity gurus who spin the multicultural propaganda are fond of saying that there are thousands of religions in the U.S., and therefore it is wrong to make a big deal about Christmas. What they don't say is that 95 percent of Americans who are religious are Christian. In other words, only 5 percent of those who are religious belong to a religion other than Christianity. Yes, there are many religions in this country, but aside from Jews and Muslims, each comprising roughly two percent of the population, the rest are tiny. Some could fit all their members on a tugboat.

Approximately 40 percent of Americans say religion is an important part of their life; these are the “very religious,” the ones who also attend church (or synagogue or mosque) on a weekly basis. The rest of the population is roughly split between those who occasionally attend church (they see religion as playing at least some role in their life), and those who are not religious.

This last segment is the most diverse of the three: about half of these “non-religious” persons still go to church, albeit infrequently, and almost all of them believe in God; the other half, about 16 percent of the population, never attend church. Those who do not attend church are called the “nones”; when asked about their religious affiliation, they say they have none. But contrary to the popular perception, most of them are neither agnostic or atheist, and a slight majority still believe in God. Indeed, agnostics are only 3.3 percent of the population and atheists are a mere 2.4 percent. To show how few hard-core agnostics and atheists there are, consider that 13 percent of these two segments still attend church on a

monthly or yearly basis.

Clearly, then, we have been misled, intentionally I would argue, about the religious profile of Americans. Those who do the misleading include professors (they are disproportionately represented among agnostics and atheists), professional atheist crusaders, and the diversity specialists who push the multicultural agenda. They would have us believe that all non-Christians are upset about Christmas celebrations, but this is a ruse: they are the ones who want to stamp out Christmas.

What do they want? They want to eviscerate the Judeo-Christian ethos from our society. They see Christianity, and especially Catholicism, as the enemy. So they seek to neuter Christmas and purge the textbooks of any positive treatment of Christianity. I'm not exaggerating: I recently debated the head of American Atheists on TV, and he told me before going on the air that he hates religion; the intensity of his remark was palpable. And judging from his work, it is Catholicism that upsets him the most.

Don't get me wrong: most non-believers are not haters. Agnostics tend to be intellectually lazy; they are more indifferent than hostile. Atheists are varied as well, though among this segment are the "new atheists," the militant ones. It is they who are on the march, seeking to scrub our culture free of Christianity.

What can we do? Let them know that we will not walk away from making public statements about Christianity. When I took over as president in 1993, I noticed there was a huge menorah in Central Park, but no nativity scene. I was determined to change that: the next year, and every year since, we erected a life-size manger scene on the corner of 59th and 5th, at the foot of Central Park.

This year, in addition to our nativity scene, I wanted to do something different. A few years ago we answered an anti-

Christmas billboard that was displayed on the New Jersey side of the Lincoln Tunnel with our own pro-Christmas billboard on the New York side. This year we are putting an enormous billboard in Times Square featuring a nativity scene that can be seen night and day. Send Modern-Day Scrooges a Message: Celebrate the Prince of Peace. See page 12.

Our crèche, and our billboard, are important cultural markers. It is critical that our side knows that it is not acceptable to dumb-down our sacred holiday. We want to make our side proud; we also want to embolden them. So, yes, it is okay for non-Christians and non-believers to partake in Christmas celebrations. But let's not forget about its essence. We have a legal right and a moral duty to publicly proclaim our religion.

Merry Christmas!

FLORIDA PROFESSOR REPRIMANDED

On September 27, University of South Florida (USF) professor Dr. Timothy M. Weil insulted Catholics at a public forum off campus. Someone who was at the event contacted the Catholic League about it. Bill Donohue then wrote a letter to USF officials (see p. 4) about the incident. After almost three weeks elapsed, Donohue went public on October 22, publishing an excerpt of his letter.

Donohue's letter was sent to the top administrative and academic officials at USF. He also sent a copy to the 16 members of the Florida Board of Governors, and to John B. Ramil, Chairman of the University of South Florida System. In his news release on this subject, he listed the contact information of the school's news manager, thereby allowing

those who receive our statements to contact this person. Adding to this pressure was a story in the *Tampa Tribune* about the controversy; Donohue also mentioned it to Gretchen Carlson on Fox News.

Donohue was not happy to learn that Professor Weil's initial reaction was to say that his analogy, equating priests with feces, was misunderstood, and that it was academically valid.

"Weil needs to educate me," Donohue said in his news release responding to Weil's denial. "He needs to publicly explain what he meant by equating a priest with feces. He also needs to explain why, if the audience member who spoke up was wrong, did he gleefully stroll around the room signaling his approval. Moreover, he needs to explain to the Florida taxpayers why they should pay the salary of someone who thinks it is academically valid to insult 70 million Roman Catholics."

Dr. Julianne Serovich, Dean of the College of Behavioral & Community Sciences, told Donohue that she was sorry she had not gotten back to him earlier; she said she was now looking into the matter.

On October 30, Dr. Serovich notified Donohue that Dr. Weil had received a "Letter of Counsel" and that he would be apologizing.

Dr. Weil's letter of apology went directly to Donohue; it was handled professionally. Donohue accepted it, and wished him well with his academic career. He also wrote to Dr. Serovich saying that her response was "judicious."

Donohue never sought to get Weil fired. All he wanted was a reprimand and an apology. By achieving that outcome, the point would not be lost on other faculty members: they might think twice before needlessly offending Catholics again. Case closed.

USF PROFESSOR MOCKS PRIESTS

Below is a copy of the October 3 letter sent by Bill Donohue to officials at the University of South Florida (USF) concerning an anti-Catholic incident. After giving the university two weeks to respond, Donohue went public; only then did this case move forward.

October 3, 2013

Dr. Mario Hernandez
University of South Florida
Chairman, Department of Child & Family Studies
13301 Bruce B. Downs Blvd.; MHC 2321
Tampa, FL 33612

Dear Dr. Hernandez:

As president of the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization, I take anti-Catholic incidents seriously. A disturbing complaint has reached my office regarding the behavior of a professor in your department.

I have been told that at a recent conference held at the Hilton Daytona Beach Resort, Dr. Timothy M. Weil gave a paper, "Impact of Rule Governance on Motivation and its Clinical Application"; it was part of the proceedings of the Florida Association for Behavior Analysis. In his September 27 address, it is alleged that he did the following:

He put up a picture of an equal sign (=) in the middle of the large screen and then added a picture of a priest holding a crucifix to the left of it, and a picture of a toilet to the

*right. He then asked the audience to comment on what the picture means. Someone from the audience yelled, "They're both full of s***." After the audience settled down, Dr. Weil strolled around the room and gleefully repeated the response; those who were here knew he got the response he sought.*

I taught sociology for 16 years at a college in Pittsburgh and served for 20 years on the board of the National Association of Scholars. I have also written two books on the First Amendment. I have great respect for academic freedom, but I also have great contempt for those who abuse it. There is obviously nothing of any academic value when someone gratuitously insults the adherents of any world religion. Whatever point Dr. Weil was trying to make could surely have been made without unnecessarily offending Catholic sensibilities.

I have two requests: a) is the allegation true? and b) if it is, what exactly is going to be done about it?

I have read the FABA Code of Ethics and it provides no relief for those who would engage in such a manner. I also note that the Faculty Handbook says, "Do not present yourself as a representative of the University of South Florida in matters not related to performance of your job duties." In the conference program, it states that Dr. Weil is from USF; his e-mail is also listed.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President

cc: Dr. Timothy Weil; Dr. Julianne Serovich; Dr. Judy Genshaft

USCCB MEETING A SUCCESS

In mid-November, an election was held for the new president and vice president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in Baltimore.

Those who have been pushing the bishops to abandon their opposition to the Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate, abortion and gay marriage lost big time last month. On November 13, the bishops voted unanimously to continue their fight against the Health and Human Services mandate.

The bishops invoked the name of Pope Francis, sending a message to those who are trying to hijack the pope's words to pressure the bishops to abandon their cultural concerns. "Pope Francis has reminded us," they said, that "there is only one thing which the Church quite clearly demands: the freedom to proclaim the Gospel in its entirety, even when it runs counter to the world, even when it goes against the tide."

The influence of Cardinal Timothy Dolan, who ably led the USCCB for the past three years, is not over: his commanding presence helped to shape the selection of Archbishop Joseph Kurtz as the new president, and Cardinal Daniel DiNardo as the new vice president. The "Dolan Effect" was palpable, and will be felt for years.

By electing Archbishop Joseph Kurtz as president, and Cardinal Daniel DiNardo as vice president, the bishops affirmed their commitment to religious liberty, the life of the unborn, and marriage equity.

Archbishop Kurtz took to the streets of Louisville last year protesting the HHS mandate; Cardinal DiNardo, as chairman of the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities, wrote letters to

the U.S. senators expressing the bishops' opposition to the mandate.

On abortion, Kurtz stated in November that "the deliberate destruction of unborn children at their most vulnerable stage is a travesty." In June, when Texas Sen. Wendy Davis filibustered a pro-life bill, DiNardo called on Governor Rick Perry to call for a special session to revive the bill.

Archbishop Kurtz, who is the previous chairman of the USCCB's Ad Hoc Committee on the Defense of Marriage, set the agenda for the bishops in opposing gay marriage. In June, Cardinal DiNardo called the Supreme Court's ruling allowing gay marriage a "grave injustice."

It is plain for everyone to see that the bishops will not walk away from the fight for religious liberty, a battle thrust upon them by the Obama administration. They must also deal with the effects of public policy decisions that have done more to punish the poor, and promote inequality, than any previous administration. But with the leadership of Archbishop Kurtz, and Cardinal DiNardo, the ratification of the "Dolan Effect" is assured, and so, too, is progress. This bodes well for everyone. Kudos to the USCCB for affirming tradition and holding the line.

NO PRIEST IS SAFE

Four recent news stories, covering priests in Baltimore, Philadelphia, St. Paul and Chicago, make it clear that no Catholic priest is safe. Anyone can accuse a priest of molestation, no matter how long ago, and get away with it.

Father Michael Kolodziej, who is a former Minister Provincial

of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual, was suspended last month from all public ministries by the Franciscans. Furthermore, the Archdiocese of Baltimore withdrew his faculties so that he can no longer serve as a priest.

Sounds as if the priest must have been convicted of something serious. In fact, Father Kolodziej has not been found guilty of anything. His accuser says he was abused by the priest while they were wrestling at Baltimore's Archbishop Curley High School in the mid-to-late 1970s. That's it.

So here we have the spectacle of a 69-year-old priest being subjected to public embarrassment about groping a teenager in front of spectators several decades ago. Sexual abuse, like most crimes, is done in private—not in front of an audience. And victims don't sit on it, pondering what to do for 35 years. But when it comes to priests, things are different.

Marci Hamilton is a law professor who works at Yeshiva University in New York, a school that has had many recent sexual abuse scandals. But she has no time to investigate Jews, either at Yeshiva or in Brooklyn, home to an explosion of child rape by Orthodox Jews. That's because she is too busy trying to stick it to priests.

Charges of sexual abuse were made last September by the Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams against Father Robert Brennan. A month later, the charges were withdrawn, following the accuser's death; he overdosed on drugs. Enter Hamilton. In November, she joined other rapacious lawyers announcing that they were filing a lawsuit on behalf of the family of the alleged victim. Hamilton is obsessed with the Catholic Church in Philadelphia; it was her 18th lawsuit against the archdiocese.

Another Philadelphia priest, Father John P. Paul, stepped down as pastor of Our Lady of Calvary Parish in November. He resigned because of the emotional stress he has been under. In

all his years as a priest, he has never had an accusation made against him (he was ordained in 1972). But now, out of the blue, he is being charged with abusing two boys in 1968, when he was a seminarian. It's funny how both of these alleged victims decided to wait 45 years to make their case—in tandem, no less.

The police were contacted but the case was dropped because the statute of limitations had expired. But Father Paul is still being investigated by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

Had Father Paul been Mr. Paul, a public school teacher, and he was accused of violating a minor at the end of the school year last June, the statute of limitations would have expired (accusers have 90 days to file charges against public school teachers). Moreover, no one would be investigating him. But when it comes to Father Paul, even though the alleged abuse happened in the year Rev. Martin Luther King and Sen. Bobby Kennedy were shot, it's not too late to get him. It's never too late to get a priest.

Also in November, a 73-year-old priest from Chicago was shaken down for money by the same two con-artist brothers who had hustled him before. This time the priest said no. "We'll say you touched us—read the paper—they'll believe us," they said. Sadly, it's true.

Thanks to our anti-priest culture, fueled by the likes of Bill Maher, every priest is considered suspect. None are safe.

EMPLOYMENT BILL STUMBLES

In November, the U.S. Senate passed the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), legislation that is being touted as

progress for gay rights. The House did not take the bill up immediately; its fate is uncertain.

The Catholic League raised serious questions about the consequences of ENDA in 2007, and while some aspects of the bill have improved, efforts to strengthen the religious liberty exemptions are badly needed. The bishops remain opposed to it. Their concerns are ours: the bill is open to abuse and may impinge on religious liberty interests. It either has to be fixed or scratched.

Workplace discrimination against those who are not heterosexual has decreased markedly, calling into question which organizations the advocates for ENDA want to blanket. Sexual orientation, unlike race or gender, is inseparable from behavioral issues, thus drawing the attention of religious organizations. If the proponents of ENDA are sincere in their stated objective not to unfairly burden churches and religious groups, then locking in the exemptions already provided should not act as a deterrent to their support. Yet there is resistance to amending the bill.

Americans have seen what happens when activist judges get their hands on religious liberty cases. The result is the imposition of law crafted by the judiciary, a condition that is as unwelcome as it is unconstitutional. No wonder the bishops have strong reservations.

IN DEFENSE OF ARCHBISHOP NIENSTEDT

*Bill Donohue sent the following letter on October 25, 2013, to
Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganó, the U.S. Papal Nuncio:*

Your Excellency:

This letter is in response to a missive sent to you by a motley group of dissident Catholics, as well as those no longer in communion with the Church, asking for the resignation of Archbishop John Nienstedt. The request is illegitimate: Those pressing this issue cite Canon law as the basis of their agenda, yet they themselves belong to organizations that expressly reject the teachings of the Catholic Church on many issues. That is why some U.S. bishops have excommunicated anyone who belongs to some of these rogue Catholic groups.

The Catholic Coalition for Church Reform never mentions the fact that the Archbishop of St. Paul and Minneapolis has no offending priests in ministry, or that he has taken exceptional steps to ensure the integrity of the archdiocese. Not surprisingly, some in the secular media are giving high profile to this orchestrated effort to unseat Archbishop Nienstedt. He deserves better.

The letter you were sent contains many factual errors, all intentionally designed to smear Archbishop Nienstedt. I am enclosing a piece that was published today by Joan Frawley Desmond in the *National Catholic Register* that accurately describes this issue.

Unlike those who harbor an animus against the Church, the Catholic League is listed in the Official Catholic Directory. Our staff, and our members, are loyal sons and daughters of the Catholic Church. As such, it pains us when we read of attempts by the Church's adversaries to malign innocent persons.

Thank you for your consideration.

ATTACKS ON MINNESOTA ARCHDIOCESE WIDEN

There is a concerted effort on the part of anti-Catholic lawyers, city officials, journalists and professional victims' groups to attack the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, which is headed by Archbishop John Nienstedt. We've seen this before in Kansas City, Kansas when foes of the Church tried to gang up on Bishop Robert Finn.

For reasons that remain unexplained, the St. Paul Police Department has decided to reopen a case involving a priest from the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis who was accused in 2004 of having child porn on his computer. He was investigated for seven months, and when nothing was found, the case was dropped. Now it is being reopened.

The reopening of this case comes on the heels of a public plea by Commander Mary Nash asking anyone who was molested by a priest to come forward. She did not ask if someone had been abused by a rabbi, minister, school teacher, stepfather or police officer—only if it was a priest. Now she is back for a second time, making the same plea. This kind of religious profiling is legally suspect and morally unethical.

In a related matter, there was a curious news story in the November 15 *Star Tribune* that cites Commander Nash's anger with the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis regarding a priest, Curtis Wehmeyer, who pleaded guilty to sexual offenses. The story is curious because it is not news—it is simply a rehashing of a story dating back to June 2012. It is hard not to conclude that this "story" is a spin job on the part of the newspaper to make the police look good and the

archdiocese look bad. No matter, it has nothing to do with the concerns of the Catholic League in 2013.

Police Chief Tom Smith will not answer questions regarding this issue, which is why we went public. His department reportedly has no funds to continue its “cold case” unit—there are several unresolved murders in St. Paul—yet it has the time and money to reopen a non-homicide case against a priest. Something is wrong, and we intend to find out what it is.

On November 13, 2013, Bill Donohue e-mailed a letter to Police Chief Smith asking him to explain what was going on. When Smith did not respond, two days later Donohue wrote him a two-page letter outlining his concerns. A copy was sent to the mayor, city council members and the media in St. Paul.

One city council member wrote back defending the police department by saying there had been numerous complaints against the archdiocese. So what? Complaints and convictions are two different things. And are we to believe that there are no complaints against other religions, or the public schools, for that matter? Why is the archdiocese being treated differently?

MPR, the local public radio station, has shown a clear bias in its reporting, asking Archbishop Nienstedt to list all the names of offending priests under his care. It knew the answer when it asked the question: there are none. This, coupled with the *Star Tribune* “news story,” smacks of an agenda. Now there are threats that a grand jury may be launched. Nienstedt wasn’t even the archbishop when most of the contentious issues arose.

Witch-hunts are always wrong, but when good men like Archbishop Nienstedt are involved, they are despicable.