

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT CHALLENGED; WE RESPOND QUICKLY

The animus against Christmas manifests itself in a myriad of ways, and this year is no exception. We took a pass on some trivial issues, but we jumped right into the fray when more serious attacks were launched.

The anti-Christmas bigots from the Freedom From Religion Foundation threatened a lawsuit against a small Minnesota town because it displayed a nativity scene in a public park. For 23 years, no one in Wadena complained about the crèche in Burlington Northern Park, but after the atheist group made public its threat, along came one resident to complain. The town's lawyer agreed that the display was illegal, and the city council obliged by authorizing its removal.

Bill Donohue wrote an open letter to the city council asking them to reconsider their decision. "There is nothing unconstitutional about putting a nativity scene on public property as long as it is considered a public forum," he said. He further observed that this park was a public forum because it hosts all kinds of community activities. He offered by way of example the Catholic League's nativity scene in Central Park: it has never been challenged, and that's because the park is a public forum. While high court rulings on city-owned crèches are more complicated, they can still pass constitutional muster.

A very different type of assault on Catholic sensibilities was launched by *Cosmopolitan* magazine. It drew a quick rebuke from us.

The cover story of the December edition is titled, "Sex Wish List." The article contains 24 sexual suggestions, all of which exploit the Christian and Jewish holidays. Most

conspicuously, it includes a “Sex-Vent Calendar,” a rip-off of the Advent calendar. It features sexually explicit ideas, the kind we are reluctant to publish in *Catalyst*.

We went public with our denunciation of this offensive edition. We noted that *Cosmopolitan* had long since evolved into a “soft-porn publication,” but “up until now it had at least stayed away from trashing Christmas and Jewish holidays.”

The removal of Christmas symbols from malls operated by Simon Property Group generated such a backlash that they were quickly restored. Rick Hinshaw, our director of communications, called the company’s director of public relations to make sure he understood why the initial decision was wrong.

When asked if we were upset about a red Starbucks Christmas coffee cup unadorned by Christmas symbols, we said no. We reserve our resources for serious issues.

We expect that in the next issue of *Catalyst* we will have more to say on anti-Christmas assaults that occurred in December. Meantime, a Merry Christmas to all.

HHS MANDATE UNDER REVIEW

The United States Supreme Court has agreed to hear a challenge to the constitutionality of the Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate that threatens to eviscerate the religious liberties of many Catholic non-profits. Not surprisingly, editorials in the *Los Angeles Times* and the *New York Times* took the side of the Obama administration.

We pointed out that the newspapers either underplayed or ignored the central issue involved in this case. They both maintain that the accommodations offered by HHS—no direct payment for objectionable services are required—resolve this matter. They do not.

The key issue is whether the federal government has a right to define what constitutes a Catholic organization. The Obama team says that Catholic groups that hire and/or service non-Catholics must forfeit their claim as a Catholic entity. So, for example, because the Little Sisters of the Poor do not discriminate against non-Catholics, they are deemed insufficiently Catholic to qualify for an exemption. This is patently absurd. Worse, it gives an authority to the federal government it should not have.

Even if the Supreme Court decided that the accommodations provided by HHS were not deemed to be a “substantial burden” on these Catholic groups, it should rule that the government has no right to invoke such spurious hiring and servicing criteria in deciding which Catholic groups are legitimate and which are bogus.

A decision is expected next spring. At stake are conscience rights, religious liberty, and the very functioning of Catholic non-profits.

NO “SPOTLIGHT” ON HOLLYWOOD CHILD RAPE

William A. Donohue

In the run-up to the November 6 debut of “Spotlight,” movie

reviewers hailed it as an eye-opening account of the sexual abuse scandal that occurred in the Boston Archdiocese.

But Hollywood has no interest in turning its cameras on itself, which is why the public's eyes have been shut tight from seeing a movie that documents child rape in Tinseltown.

In 2011, when word surfaced that actor Corey Feldman was going public with accounts of child sexual molestation in Hollywood, it caught the attention of Boston producer Matthew Valentinas.

He had been contemplating doing a film on sexual abuse anyway, so when Feldman's revelations hit the news, he decided the time was ripe to strike.

Feldman was interviewed by ABC's "Primetime Live" in August 2011. He astonished viewers when he exclaimed, "I can tell you that the No. 1 problem in Hollywood was, and is, and always will be, pedophilia."

He said that when he was 14, he was "surrounded" by child molesters who acted like "vultures." Pointedly, he blamed "a Hollywood mogul" for the premature death of his friend, Corey Haim; he died the year before.

Stories about Hollywood sexual predators have been around for decades, but it took Feldman's admission to make people take a second look. As it turned out, however, the interest that Valentinas had in pursuing this story was atypical.

For example, quite unlike the way the media pounced when revelations about priestly sexual abuse in Boston were made public in 2002, newspapers didn't go near this story.

In fact, following Feldman's interview, only one newspaper, *the International Business Times*, carried a story about the nest of child abusers in Hollywood.

Valentinas was not deterred. He wanted to give high profile to the pedophilia rings that dot Hollywood, and to that end he

enlisted Amy Berg to do the film. She was a veteran: She was nominated for an Oscar for her documentary about molesting priests, "Deliver Us From Evil."

Berg's film, "An Open Secret," is a devastating look at the way Hollywood predators manipulated, intimidated, and raped aspiring child actors.

The rapists were not strangers – they were their mentors. To be specific, they were managers, publicists, and agents, men who were held in high esteem by everyone, including the child actors and models whom they molested.

Not only did they use their positions of power to sexually abuse innocent kids, they did so with impunity.

Valentinas assumed it would not be hard to find distributors interested in his film. He was wrong. "We approached most studios and everyone passed," he said. "We thought, we have a great director, everything was cleared and legally vetted – why would it be a risk for a company to take it?"

It is not hard to figure out why Valentinas hit a brick wall. He was treading in dangerous waters, offending the Hollywood establishment. For similar reasons, no one in Hollywood was interested in picking up Mel Gibson's classic, "The Passion of the Christ."

Whenever a film maker cuts sharply against the Hollywood grain, he can expect to be stonewalled. This is the way the "tolerant class" operates: it works overtime to ensure culturally correct movies.

The resistance to "An Open Secret" was evident from the beginning. On Sept. 8, 2014, New York magazine said, "The Amy Berg documentary . . . has been slow to find distribution."

It also noted that "discussions with Mark Cuban's Magnolia Pictures went nowhere." Two months later, *Screen International*

observed that “few distributors will dare to release a film with such incendiary claims.”

Fast forward to the spring of 2015. Deadline did a piece titled, “‘An Open Secret’s’ Difficult Road to Distribution,” noting that “Executive producer Gabe Hoffman wouldn’t name names, but said, ‘We went to everybody and anybody at all the biggest companies and got turned down everywhere.’”

The Guardian, an influential U.K. publication, alerted readers to what was going on: “But the content of the film . . . had led to difficulties getting people to see it. It’s been rejected by major film festivals, including London, [and has] struggled to find distribution.”

On Sept. 17, Diane Dimond, a columnist for the *Rockland County Times*, really let loose: “I’ve expressed hope that throngs go to see the documentary but, not surprisingly, the producers have had a difficult time getting movie theaters to agree to show it. Are movie-house operators afraid of offending Hollywood executives?”

Dimond added that “The union representing actors [SAG-AFTRA] has threatened to sue Amy Berg, the director of the film.” She concluded, “Note that you haven’t heard a peep from studio executives, big talent agencies or entertainment unions about steps they’ve taken to protect young actors against sexual predators.”

“An Open Secret” has already played at theaters in Los Angeles, New York, Denver, and Seattle, and it has been accepted for the documentary competition at the Stockholm International Film Festival starting Nov. 11.

But don’t look for it to come to your neighborhood cinema anytime soon.

The Hollywood moguls, who claim a fierce allegiance to free speech, don’t want you to know about the dirty little secret

of child rape in Tinseltown.

SHINING THE LIGHT ON “SPOTLIGHT”

The following report written by Bill Donohue was published on the Catholic League’s website on November 2. It was sent to those in the media and entertainment industries as well as Catholic dioceses throughout the nation.

The movie “Spotlight” is bound to spark more conversation about the sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church. Unfortunately, much of what the American public knows about this issue is derived from the popular culture, something this film will only abet. Therefore, the time is ripe to revisit what the actual data on this subject reveal.

When the *Boston Globe* sent the nation reeling in 2002 with revelations of priestly sexual abuse, and the attendant cover-up, Catholics were outraged by the level of betrayal. This certainly included the Catholic League. The scandal cannot be denied. What is being denied, however, is the existence of another scandal—the relentless effort to keep the abuse crisis alive, and the deliberate refusal to come to grips with its origins. Both scandals deserve our attention.

Myth: The Scandal Never Ended

When interviewed about the scandal in 2002 by the *New York Times*, I said, “I am not the church’s water boy. I am not here to defend the indefensible.” In the Catholic League’s 2002 *Annual Report*, I even defended the media. “The *Boston Globe*, the *Boston Herald*, and the *New York Times* covered the story

with professionalism," I wrote.

A decade later things had changed. In the Catholic League's 2011 Annual Report, I offered a critical assessment of the media. "In a nutshell," I said, "what changed was this: in 2011, unlike what happened in 2002, virtually all the stories were about accusations against priests dating back decades, sometimes as long as a half-century ago. Keep in mind that not only were most of the priests old and infirm, many were dead; thus, only one side of the story could be told. Adding to our anger was the fact that no other institution, religious or secular, was being targeted for old allegations."

It became clear that by 2011 we were dealing with two scandals, not one. Scandal I was internal—the church-driven scandal. This was the result of indefensible decisions by the clergy: predatory priests and their enabling bishops. Scandal II was external, the result of indefensible cherry-picking of old cases by rapacious lawyers and vindictive victims' groups. They were aided and abetted by activists, the media, and Hollywood.

Regarding Scandal II, more than cultural elites were involved. "In 2011," I wrote, "it seemed as if 'repressed memories' surfaced with alacrity, but only among those who claimed they were abused by a priest. That there was no similar explosion of 'repressed memories' on the part of those who were molested by ministers, rabbis, teachers, psychologists, athletic coaches, and others, made us wonder what was going on."

The steeple-chasing lawyers and professional victims' organizations had a vested economic interest in keeping the scandal alive; the former made hundreds of millions and they, in turn, lavishly greased the latter. But it wasn't money that motivated the media and Hollywood elites to keep the story alive—it was ideology.

To be specific, the Catholic Church has long been the bastion

of traditional morality in American society, and if there is anything that the big media outlets and the Hollywood studios loathe, it is being told that they need to put a brake on their libido. So when the scandal came to light, the urge to pounce proved irresistible. The goal was, and still is, to attenuate the moral authority of the Catholic Church. It certainly wasn't outrage over the sexual abuse of minors that stirred their interest: if that were the case, then many other institutions would have been put under the microscope. But none were.

There is no conspiracy here. What unfolded is the logical outcome of the ideological leanings of our cultural elites. Unfortunately, "Spotlight" will only add to Scandal II. How so? Just read what those connected with the film are saying.

Tom McCarthy, who co-wrote the script with Josh Singer, said, "I would love for Pope Francis and the cardinals and bishops and priests to see this [film]." Would it make any difference? "I remain pessimistic," he says. "To be honest," he declares, "I expect no reaction at all."

Mark Ruffalo plays a reporter, and, like McCarthy, he says, "I hope the Vatican will use this movie to begin to right those wrongs." (my italics.) He is not sanguine about the prospects. Indeed, he has given up on the Church.

The view that the Catholic Church has not even begun to "right those wrongs" is widely shared. Indeed, the impression given to the American people, by both the media and Hollywood—it is repeated nightly by TV talk-show hosts—is that the sexual abuse scandal in the Church never ended. Impressions count: In December 2012, a CBS News survey found that 55 percent of Catholics, and 73 percent of Americans overall, believe that priestly sexual abuse of minors remains a problem. Only 14 percent of Americans believe it is not a problem today.

Commentary by those associated with "Spotlight," as well as

movie reviewers and pundits, are feeding this impression. But the data show that the conventional wisdom is wrong. The fact of the matter is that the sexual abuse of minors by priests has long ceased to be an institutional problem. All of these parties—Catholics, the American public, the media, and Hollywood—entertain a view that is not supported by the evidence. “Spotlight” will only add to the propaganda.

In 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) commissioned researchers from the John Jay College of Criminal Justice to conduct a major study of priestly sexual abuse; it covered the years 1950 to 2002. It found that accusations of the sexual molestation of minors were made against 4,392 priests.

This figure represents 4 percent of all Catholic priests. What was not widely touted is that 43 percent of these allegations (1881) were unsubstantiated. To qualify as “unsubstantiated” the bar was set high: the allegation had to be “proven to be untruthful and fabricated” as a result of a criminal investigation.

In other words, roughly 2 percent of priests were likely guilty of molesting minors. Accusations proven to be false should carry no weight in assessing wrongdoing, yet the fabrications are treated by the media as if they were true. It must also be said that this rate of false accusations is much higher than found in studies of this problem in the general population.

More than half of the accused priests had only one allegation brought against them. Moreover, 3.5 percent accounted for 26 percent of all the victims. As computed by professor Philip Jenkins, an expert on this subject, the John Jay data reveal that “Out of 100,000 priests active in the U.S. in this half-century, a cadre of just 149 individuals—one priest out of every 750—accounted for a quarter of all allegations of clergy abuse.”

These data give the lie to the accusation that during this period the sexual molestation of minors by priests was rampant. It manifestly was not. Even more absurd is the accusation that the problem is still ongoing.

In the last ten years, from 2005 to 2014, an average 8.4 credible accusations were made against priests for molestation that occurred in any one of those years. The data are available online at the USCCB website (see the reports issued for these years). Considering that roughly 40,000 priests could have had a credible accusation made against them, this means that *almost 100 percent of priests had no such accusation made against them!*

Sadly, I cannot name a single media outlet, including Catholic ones, that even mentioned this, much less emphasized it. The Catholic News Service, paid for by the bishops, should have touted this, but it didn't. This delinquency is what helps to feed the misperception that the Church has not even begun to deal with this problem.

In 2011, researchers from John Jay issued another report, "The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950-2010." While the document was often critical, it commended the Church for its forthrightness in dealing with this problem. "No other institution has undertaken a public study of sexual abuse," the report said, "and as a result, there are no comparable data to those collected by the Catholic Church." Looking at the most recent data, the report found that the "incidence of child sexual abuse has declined in both the Catholic Church and in society in general, though the rate of decline is greater in the Catholic Church in the same time period."

So much for the myth that the Church has not yet "begun" to address this issue. Every study by the John Jay researchers shows that most of the abuse took place between 1965-1985. This is not hard to figure out: the sexual revolution began in

the 1960s and fizzled out by the mid-1980s. Libertinism drove the sexual revolution, and it hit the seminaries as well, especially in the 1970s. Matters slowed once AIDS was uncovered in 1981. It took fear—the fear of death—to bring about a much needed reality check.

Myth: Celibacy is the Root Cause

On October 28, 2015, a columnist for the Boston Globe wrote an article about “Spotlight” titled, “Based on a True Story.” Similarly, script writer Tom McCarthy said, “We made a commitment to let the facts play.”

No one disputes the fact that predatory priests were allowed to run wild in the Boston Archdiocese; the problem was not confined to Boston, but it was the epicenter. That molesting priests were moved around like chess pieces to unsuspecting parishes is also true. Ditto for the cover-up orchestrated by some bishops. This is the very stuff of Scandal I. Where the factual claims dissolve, however, is when the script claims to know what triggered the scandal.

“Spotlight” made its premiere on September 3 at the Venice Film Festival. A review published by the international French news agency, AFP, noted that “in Spotlight’s nuanced script, few in the Catholic hierarchy have shown any inclination to address whether the enforced celibacy of priests might be one of the root causes of the problem.”

The celibacy myth was debunked by the John Jay 2011 report. “Celibacy has been constant in the Catholic Church since the eleventh century and could not account for the rise and subsequent decline in abuse cases from the 1960s through the 1980s.” But if celibacy did not drive the scandal, what did? The John Jay researchers cite the prevalence of sexually immature men who were allowed to enter the seminaries, as well as the effects of the sexual revolution.

There is much truth to this observation, but it is incomplete.

Who were these sexually immature men? The popular view, one that is promoted by the movie as well, suggests they were pedophiles. The data, however, prove this to be wrong.

When the word got out that "Spotlight" was going to hit the big screen, Mike Fleming, Jr. got an Exclusive for Deadline Hollywood; his piece appeared on August 8, 2014. The headline boasted that it was a "Boston Priest Pedophile Pic." In his first sentence, he described the film as "a drama that Tom McCarthy will direct about the *Boston Globe* investigation into pedophile priests." This narrative is well entrenched in the media, and in the culture at large. Whenever this issue is discussed, it is pitched as a "pedophile" scandal. We can now add "Spotlight's" contribution to this myth.

One of the most prominent journalists on the *Boston Globe* "Spotlight" team was Kevin Cullen. On February 28, 2004, he wrote a story assessing a report issued by the National Review Board, appointed by the USCCB, on what exactly happened. He quoted the head of the Board's research committee, well-respected attorney Robert S. Bennett, as saying it was not pedophilia that drove the scandal. "There are no doubt many outstanding priests of a homosexual orientation who live chaste, celibate lives," he said, "but any evaluation of the causes and context of the current crisis must be cognizant of the fact that more than 80 percent of the abuse at issue was of a homosexual nature."

Bennett was correct, and Cullen knew it to be true as well. "Of the 10,667 reported victims [in the time period between 1950 and 2002]," Cullen wrote, "81 percent were male, the report said, and more than three-quarters [the exact figure is 78 percent] were postpubescent, meaning the abuse did not meet the clinical definition of pedophilia." One of Bennett's colleagues, Dr. Paul McHugh, former psychiatrist-in-chief at Johns Hopkins University, was more explicit. "This behavior was homosexual predation on American Catholic youth," he said, "yet it is not being discussed." It never is.

So it is indisputable that *the Boston Globe* "Spotlight" team knew that it was homosexuality, not pedophilia, that drove the scandal. Yet that is not what is being reported today. Indeed, as recently as November 1, 2015, a staff reporter for the *Boston Globe* said the movie was about "the pedophile priest crisis." This flies in the face of the evidence. In fact, the John Jay 2011 report found that less than 5 percent of the abusive priests fit the diagnosis of pedophilia, thus concluding that "it is inaccurate to refer to abusers as 'pedophile priests.'"

The evidence, however, doesn't count. Politics counts. The mere suggestion that homosexual priests accounted for the lion's share of the problem was met with cries of homophobia. This is at the heart of Scandal II. Even the John Jay researchers went on the defensive. Most outrageous was the voice of dissident, so-called progressive, Catholics: It was they who pushed for a relaxation of sexual mores in the seminaries, thus helping to create Scandal I. Then they helped to create Scandal II by refusing to take ownership of the problem they foisted; they blamed "sexual repression" for causing the crisis.

So how did the deniers get around the obvious? Cullen said that "most [of the molested] fell victim to ephebophiles, men who are sexually attracted to adolescent or postpubescent children." But clinically speaking, ephebophilia is a waste-basket term of no scientific value.

Philip Jenkins once bought into this idea but eventually realized that the word "communicates nothing to most well-informed readers. These days I tend rather to speak of these acts as 'homosexuality.'" Jenkins attributes his change of mind to Mary Eberstadt, one of the most courageous students of this issue. "When was the last time you heard the phrase 'ephebophile' applied to a heterosexual man?" In truth, ephebophilia is shorthand for homosexuals who prey on adolescents.

Even those who know better, such as the hierarchy of the Church, are reluctant to mention the devastating role that homosexual priests have played in molesting minors. In April 2002, the cardinals of the United States, along with the leadership of the USCCB and the heads of several offices of the Holy See, issued a Communiqué from the Vatican on this issue. "Attention was drawn to the fact that almost all the cases involved adolescents and therefore were not cases of true pedophilia" they said. So what were they? They were careful not to drop the dreaded "H" word.

Further proof that the problem is confined mostly to gay priests is provided by Father Michael Peterson, co-founder of St. Luke's Institute, the premier treatment center in the nation for troubled priests. He frankly admits, "We don't see heterosexual pedophiles at all." This suggests that virtually all the priests who abused prepubescent children had a homosexual orientation.

The spin game is intellectually dishonest. When adult men have sex with postpubescent females, the predatory behavior is seen as heterosexual in nature. But when adult men have sex with postpubescent males, the predatory behavior is not seen as homosexual in nature. This isn't science at work—it's politics, pure and simple.

I have said it many times before, and I will say it again: most gay priests are not molesters but most molesting priests have been gay. It gets tiresome, however, to trot this verity out every time I address this issue. That's because it means nothing to elites in the dominant culture. Just whispering about the role gay priests have played in the sexual abuse scandal triggers howls of protest.

There is plenty of evidence that Hollywood has long been a haven for sexual predators, both straight and gay. The same is true of many religious and secular institutions throughout society. But there is little interest in the media and in

Tinseltown to profile them. They have identified the enemy and are quite content to keep pounding away.

There is no doubt that the *Boston Globe* "Spotlight" team deserved a Pulitzer Prize for exposing Scandal I. Regrettably, there will be no Pulitzer for exposing Scandal II.

CHINA DROPS ONE-CHILD POLICY

Since 1979, most parts of China, and most married couples, have been subjected to a one-child policy, but the Communist government recently dropped it. Ironically, it is doing so for the same reason it adopted it in the first place: demographic concerns. The policy was initiated because of the fear that unrestrained population growth would impair economic wellbeing. It was recently nixed because of fear that low fertility rates threaten a labor shortage, which, in turn, impairs economic wellbeing.

The Chinese Communists, of course, never address the morality of abortion, forced or elected. Human rights groups such as the United Nations and Amnesty International, as well as feminist organizations, object to the coercive aspects of a one-child policy, and to residual issues, but all of them are quite content with the morality of abortion, per se.

The new policy does not ban forced abortions; it merely says that couples can have two children. Which means that the government will have to continue its practice of monitoring a woman's menstrual cycle and fining those who are pregnant with their third child. If they are unable to pay, they will be dragged to a local clinic and injected with a lethal drug.

Ma Jian, a Chinese author, described what happened to a woman

with an unauthorized pregnancy. “For two days she writhed on the table, her hands and feet still bound with rope, waiting for her body to eject her murdered baby. In the final stage of labor, a male doctor yanked her dead fetus out by the foot, then dropped it into a garbage can. She had no money for a cab. She had to hobble home, blood dripping down her legs and staining her white sandals red.” As she pointed out, this is why China has the highest rate of female suicide in the world.

Some commentators, many of whom are market obsessed, have already hailed the new policy. Their utilitarian ethics is as corrupt as that of the Communists.

PELOSI EXPLOITS THE POPE

Following Pope Francis’ visit to the United States, it was predictable that politicians on both sides of the aisle would invoke his words when they could plausibly be interpreted as favoring or opposing certain policies. To cite the pope when advocating policies to which he would be unequivocally morally opposed, however—like Planned Parenthood’s unconscionable marketing of body parts of aborted babies—is nothing less than obscene. Yet that is what House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi did a few weeks ago as she argued against efforts to defund Planned Parenthood for engaging in that inhuman practice.

“They (House Republicans) will of course be wanting to defund Planned Parenthood, destroy the Affordable Care Act, dismantle newfound health security for millions of Americans,” Pelosi told a press briefing. “It doesn’t have to be this way. Instead, we could be working together recognizing a Republican Congress, a Democratic President, the ability for Democrats to use their leverage legislatively to have compromise for the

good of the American people. That's what Pope Francis told us to do."

Really? Quite the contrary. Speaking at the United Nations on September 25—the day after his address to Congress—the pope forcefully called for “putting an end as quickly as possible” to such “baneful” practices as “the marketing of human organs and tissues.” He called for “respect for the sacredness of every human life” including “the unborn.”

That, of course, is basic and unchanging Catholic moral teaching. Maybe Rep. Pelosi, who has described herself as an “ardent, practicing Catholic,” still doesn't get that. She needs to pick up that copy of *Catholicism for Dummies* that we sent her back in 2008, when she demonstrated her ignorance of Catholic Church teaching on abortion.

PRO-ABORTS AND BIGOTS TARGET IRELAND

On the front page of Amnesty International's website it says, “We campaign for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all.” It is a lie: Human beings not yet born, it argues, have no human rights.

When the organization was founded in 1961, it took no position on abortion. That changed in 2007. Citing issues such as rape, it endorsed decriminalization. Predictably, that didn't last: just last year it started a new campaign, My Body My Rights: it demands the legalization of unrestricted abortion everywhere on the planet. Just recently it launched an all-out assault on Ireland's Constitution because it protects the unborn.

Amnesty International is not content to make an impassioned case for abortion rights in Ireland. In fact, it has descended into the gutter by igniting a vicious anti-Catholic campaign. To do its dirty work it hired Irish actor Liam Neeson; he was featured in an obscene video.

Neeson wants Ireland's Eighth Amendment repealed because it protects the human rights of all humans. The viewer was treated to dark footage of an abandoned church, demagogically accompanied by eerie-sounding music. This teed it up for Neeson to exclaim, "A ghost haunts Ireland." The ghost, of course, is the Catholic Church, an institution that "blindly brings suffering, even death, to the women whose lives it touches." That they can't make their case for killing more kids without fanning the flames of anti-Catholicism speaks volumes.

Neeson was a good choice. A few years ago, while Muslims were raping and beheading Christians, he fell in love with Islam, and almost converted.

ACLU MYTHS ABOUT CATHOLIC HOSPITALS

A recent article posted on the Medscape website, "ACLU Says Catholic Hospitals Can Not Refuse to Perform Life-Saving Abortions," repeats ACLU myths on this subject. It is written by Arthur L. Caplan, a professor who works in the Division of Medical Ethics at NYU's Langone Medical Center. Caplan agrees with an ACLU lawsuit that seeks to force Catholic hospitals to perform abortions; the hospitals follow the directives of the bishops.

Caplan writes that “The bishops’ teaching on this says you still cannot do an abortion, even if the mother’s life depends on it.” He says that these hospitals should be required to “tell you where else you could go or refer you to places where you might be able to get the service you want, if not there.” Catholic teaching is more complicated than this.

It is always wrong to intentionally take the life of an innocent person, beginning with unborn children. But the Catholic doctrine of “double effect” allows for an operation to save the life of the mother even if “the effect” is the death of the child.

Regarding the question of consent, #27 of the “Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services,” established by the bishops, says that “informed consent” is key and that the person or the person’s surrogate should be appraised of “any reasonable and morally legitimate alternatives, including no treatment at all.” It should be noted that just this year, in one of the ACLU’s lawsuits attempting to force Catholic hospitals to perform abortions (it lost in federal court), it never mentioned this directive. Why complicate things?

Our most liberal abortion laws in the world are not enough to satisfy the ACLU, or people like Caplan. They want to jam their secular values down the throats of Catholics. And there is no such thing as a “life-saving abortion.” That’s a classic oxymoron.

YAHOO NEWS ABORTION STORY IS

INCOMPLETE

Katie Couric, the Yahoo Global News anchor, recently interviewed an official from a Queens, New York Planned Parenthood facility. The video, "What an Abortion Treatment Room Really Looks Like," was posted online and it was quite interesting. But it did not deserve a letter grade of A, B, C, D, or F; rather, it merited an I, for Incomplete.

Three rooms were featured in the video: the waiting, treatment, and recovery room. They were spanking clean. The staff was professional, though for some reason the doctor spoke in vague terms. For example, she spoke about the "procedure," but never explained exactly what it is. Merriam-Webster defines a "procedure" as "a particular way of accomplishing something or of acting." It would be helpful if the viewer knew what the doctor was seeking to accomplish. Similarly, we learned that the "procedure" ended with a "termination." But termination implies a beginning. What was it that began, and how did it begin?

The story deserved an Incomplete grade because it inexplicably ended by showing the recovery room. We never learned the fate of that which was terminated. By way of analogy, if a reporter did a story on "What a Funeral Parlor Room Really Looks Like," and ended with the body being shown in a casket, it would beg the question, "What happens to the body next?" That would require Part II; it would focus on the gravesite.

We need a Part II to the abortion story. We need to see what happens to that which was terminated. To be specific, what does Planned Parenthood do with the terminated remains? Or to be blunt, "What happens to the body next?"

TWO REPORTS CITE CHRISTIAN ANNIHILATION

We know that people of every religion are being targeted for murder and plunder in many parts of the world, and that the Communist regimes in China and North Korea are hotbeds of Christian persecution. But nothing compares to what is happening in the Middle East and Northern Africa. Quite simply, we are witnessing the annihilation of the Christian people.

The U.S. Department of State's "International Religious Freedom Report for 2014," has a detailed account of the many ways in which Muslim-run nations are wiping out Christianity. In the report's Executive Summary, Christians are mentioned 23 times in 6 pages, and they are always cited as victims, never perpetrators, of religious persecution.

"In Mosul, Iraq and nearby towns," the report says, "shortly after the takeover of the area by militants of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Christians who had been given the choice to convert, pay a ruinous tax, or die, gathered their families and what few possessions they could carry, and sought all possible means to escape."

The United Kingdom charity, Aid to the Church in Need, also released a report on this subject. The situation is so bad in Iraq that it concluded that Christianity may be extinct in five years. "There is not a single Christian family left in Mosul," said an observer. "The last one was a disabled Christian woman. She stayed because she could not get out. They came to her and said you have to get out and if you don't we will cut off your head with a sword. That was the last family."

The annihilation of Christians is not confined to Iraq. A

Syrian Catholic archbishop wrote that "My cathedral has been bombed six times and is now unusable. My home has also been hit more than 10 times. We are facing the rage of an extremist jihad: we may disappear soon."