

NEW NEA CHAIRMAN PICKED; VICTORY SECURED

On November 1, President Donald Trump nominated Mary Anne Carter to be the new chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). We labored hard to affect this decision, and we are delighted with his choice.

Heading the NEA is one of the most important posts in the nation affecting the culture, and we trust that Ms. Carter will not disappoint us. She needs to be confirmed by the Senate.

Carter is well prepared to hit the ground running. She has served as senior White House advisor to the NEA since the early days of the Trump administration, and has been acting chairman since June. Her advocacy for the arts has won the plaudits of Republicans and Democrats alike.

Raised in a military family, "MAC" as she is called by her friends, was chosen by Florida Governor Rick Scott to be his chief of staff. She oversaw and implemented his agenda, handling everything from budgetary matters to communications. Prior to that position, she served as Executive Director for Conservatives for Patients' Rights. She also did a stint at the Heritage Foundation where she was Director of U.S. Senate Relations.

This announcement means a great deal to the Catholic League. For the past ten months, we have been pushing for a morally responsible person to head the NEA. Here's why.

At the end of last year, we learned that the most obscene assault on Christians ever staged, "Jerry Springer: The Opera," was coming to New York City in January. An NEA grant was given to the production company of this vile musical, the New Group, under the tenure of the outgoing NEA chairman, Dr.

Jane Chu.

On January 23, 2018, Bill Donohue held a press conference at the National Press Club in Washington D.C. objecting to the NEA funding of the New Group. He was joined by Brent Bozell, president of the Media Research Center and a member of the Catholic League's advisory board, Dr. Deal Hudson of the Christian Review and a member of the Catholic League's board of directors, and Ralph Reed, founder and president of the Faith and Freedom Coalition.

The next day Donohue sent a letter to President Trump asking him to honor our request: "Please appoint someone who will not continue to fund anti-Catholic grantees, exhibitions, or performances."

The day after Donohue's letter to the president, the Catholic League president kept the pressure on by sending a strongly worded letter to NEA Chairman Dr. Chu, registering his concerns. She wrote back and Donohue offered a blunt response.

By choosing Mary Anne Carter to head the NEA, President Trump has made good on our request. Congratulations to him, Ms. Carter, and all of those who supported us in this effort. This is also a victory for the arts, properly understood.

CHRISTMAS CENSORS

The Christmas censors wasted no time this year trying to censor Christmas. The Chesterfield County Schools in Virginia yielded to a few students who objected to

Christmas songs that mentioned Jesus; all such songs were banned. If they had it their way, Christmas would be banned,

not simply lyrics that mention Jesus.

In 2017, there was a nativity scene at the Ravenna Courthouse Lawn, but this year it has been banned. The mayor in this Ohio town said, "When people complained, I could not defend it. For me, if I cannot defend something when people complain, I should not be doing it." Untrue. If people complained about his delinquent leadership, he would be unable to defend himself, yet he would not resign.

Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) is one of the most strident anti-Christian groups in the nation. They are trying to get a cross and a star removed from a public park in the Pennsylvania borough of Honesdale. But they have been met with opposition from Christians and Jews alike.

FFRF also objected to a nativity scene on the property of Oscoda Township in Michigan. Christians took the matter into their own hands and arranged to have the crèche erected on private property across the street from the township hall.

The Catholic League will erect its life-size nativity scene in Central Park on December 12. Check it out if you get to New York—it's right in front of the Plaza Hotel.

BISHOPS BEWARE OF SOME LAY CATHOLICS

The week before the U.S. bishops convened in Baltimore, I wrote an article warning the bishops to be careful when listening to the laity for advice. Some are responsible, I said, and some are an utter disgrace. After the conference ended on November 14, I issued another statement, detailing

the irresponsible ones.

Should the bishops listen to the laity? Of course. Should the laity govern? No. They should know their place: Their role is advisory. If the bishops want to extend greater authority to them, they can, but it smacks of arrogance for the laity to think that they are better equipped to run the Church than the bishops. Many of them can't even run their own lives without crashing on a daily basis.

Who among the laity should the bishops listen to? The ones who know their place. The first time I sat down with Cardinal John O'Connor was in December 1993. I started working at the Catholic League—our office was in the Catholic Center (the same building where O'Connor worked) on July 1, 1993. I had made some media splashes, motivating O'Connor to write about me. We had met briefly at a public event in the fall, but now he wanted to have a meeting.

Within five minutes, O'Connor asked me, "What do you need?" "Nothing," I said. A few minutes later, he asked the same question, pressing me to respond. I said, "I want nothing from you. I came to serve you. I came to inherit your problems." He turned to his assistant, an attorney, and said he could count on one hand the number of times this has happened to him over the years.

That's why O'Connor listened to me. So have some other bishops. I don't have a hidden agenda—the Catholic League is here to defend the Church against wrongdoing. I hasten to add that we are not here to defend wrongdoing committed by the clergy.

Any lay person who wants to help the bishops deal with the issue of sexual abuse should be as committed to the rights of the accused as he is to the welfare of victims. Unfortunately, we hear a great deal about the latter these days, but little about the former.

In today's environment it takes courage to insist on the due process rights of priests and bishops who are accused of sexual misconduct. However, not to do so is a grave injustice. All of the accused must be considered innocent until proven otherwise, and there should be no exception for anyone who works for the Catholic Church.

Bishops looking for guidance on which lay groups and individuals they should listen to should keep in mind the content of the proposed reforms and the tone of those making them. They should sniff out lay clericalism whenever it arises.

Beware of those on the right and the left who are proposing a mountain of reforms. Some are so intrusive as to be a menace. As a corollary, beware of those who pledge to "fix" everything. It should never be assumed that everything the bishops have done is in need of repair.

Indeed, the bishops need to be more vocal in touting their successes: the fact that in the last two years for which we have data, only .005 percent of the clergy have had a credible accusation made against them is testimony to the success of the Dallas reforms.

Tone matters. When the laity become lordly, look out. The most recent example is the condescending editorial posted on November 9 by the *National Catholic Reporter*. It does not advise the bishops—it lectures them. That this is coming from the same people who reject the Church's teachings on sexuality, and who have long promoted a libertine vision—one that was adopted by many seminaries in the late 1960s and the 1970s, causing the sexual abuse scandal—makes the editorial all the more despicable.

After the conference ended, I wrote about agenda-ridden Catholics who want to turn the Catholic Church into a mainline Protestant denomination. They want married priests, women

priests (and cardinals), a greater acceptance of the gay clergy, and a radical overhaul of the Church's teachings on sexuality.

These people are oblivious to the fact that many of the mainline Protestant denominations adopted the changes they are promoting, and with disastrous results: they have been in free-fall for decades. Indeed, the decline in membership was driven by these reforms! Why is it seen as "progressive" to adopt strictures that cause a regression?

The fact is that most of the sexual abuse by the clergy has been committed by homosexuals—more than 80 percent. Not to acknowledge this verity is delinquent.

It is no more Irish bashing to note that the Irish are disproportionately represented among alcoholics than it is gay bashing to say that homosexual priests are disproportionately represented (to put it mildly) among those who sexually abuse minors. It is simply a fact of life.

As I have said before, it is not the teachings of the Church that need to change; it is the teachers (priests) who refuse to abide by them.

Merry Christmas!

BEHIND "60 MINUTES" SHOW ON BISHOP MALONE

Bill Donohue

Buffalo Bishop Richard J. Malone was the subject of a recent edition of "60 Minutes." But there was more to this story than

what the CBS show aired. None of the parties to this story came to the table with their hands clean.

Bishop Malone has admitted making bad decisions, but he maintains that his overall record is defensible. The "60 Minutes" segment detailed some of those bad decisions. For example, giving Father Arthur Smith, a known homosexual predator, a clean slate, and then assigning him to the post of cruise ship chaplain was indefensible.

Some priests have come forward with complaints against Bishop Malone. But one of them, Father Bob Zilliox, who was critical on TV, tempered his remarks subsequently. He should have been more careful when he granted the interview. This is especially true when dealing with shows like "60 Minutes."

The "60 Minutes" episode focused heavily on the claims made by Bishop Malone's former executive assistant, Siobhan O'Connor; she worked for him for three years. The 35-year-old quit her job on August 10, but not before anonymously turning over to WKBW-TV copies of files she obtained. The ABC-affiliate ran a three-part series on her and the church documents, and that, in turn, led CBS to interview O'Connor.

Did O'Connor ever apprise Bishop Malone of her concerns? Yes, she spoke to him in March. He said he was handling these matters. Did she do anything further, in the five months before she quit? She wrote an opinion column in the *Buffalo News* in May, stating her sympathy for the victims of abuse, but she never said a word about any wrongdoing by the bishop or anyone else in the diocese. "60 Minutes" did not ask her to explain herself.

O'Connor has moved quickly from the inquiring assistant to the courageous activist. According to CBS News, she wants a "cleansing" of the Church, saying that "full financial bankruptcy" is preferable to what she witnessed. That is quite a statement given her limited experience working with priests

and bishops.

Interestingly, on November 13, when the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops assembled in Baltimore for their fall meeting, she spoke at a rally organized by anti-Church zealots.

It appears O'Connor is fast learning the ropes of how to "cleanse" the Church. Most of those who work for the Catholic Church have never heard of Mitchell Garabedian, but somehow O'Connor has. He is a Boston attorney with a long-standing hatred of the Catholic Church—he does not hide his animus. He was at her side at a press conference on October 30 in Buffalo, saying he was prepared to defend her, if necessary.

Garabedian and I locked horns in 2011 when a Boston priest, Father Charles Murphy, died. As I said at the time, Murphy died "a broken man." The man who broke him was Garabedian.

In 2006, Garabedian sued Father Murphy for inappropriately touching a minor 25 years earlier; on the eve of the trial, the woman dropped her suit. In 2010, he sued the priest again, this time for allegedly fondling a man 40 years earlier. The accuser was deep in debt and his credibility was questioned even by his own family!

When Father Murphy died, Brian McGrory of the *Boston Globe* called what Garabedian did to him "a disgrace." I called Garabedian at the time to see if he had any regrets about pressing charges against Father Murphy, and he immediately went into a rage, screaming like a madman. I asked him to calm down, but he continued to go ballistic, making sweeping condemnations of all priests. This is the kind of lawyer that the former executive assistant managed to find.

The media involved come across even worse. On October 30, Bishop Malone released an email that O'Connor sent to employees at the diocese the day before she quit. In it, she commended the bishop for his great work, saying "it has been a

privilege to work by your side as you shepherd our diocese.” She specifically singled out his holiness, as well as his “Sheen-like eloquence” (a reference to one of the Church’s towering American figures, Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen).

O’Connor closed her letter thanking Bishop Malone for “all the opportunities I’ve had and lessons I’ve learned while working for you and with you.”

Remember, she had already leaked damaging information to the press about Malone. Did she lie about the bishop in her praiseworthy remarks, or is she simply a duplicitous activist?

When Bishop Malone released O’Connor’s letter, the Associated Press, the most powerful wire service in the nation, took the occasion to make him the bad guy. In a short news story, it said, “Bishop Blasts Whistleblower Who Copied Sex Misconduct Files.” Malone did nothing of the kind: He made public her letter, noting how contradictory it was. AP intentionally misled readers, trying to exculpate O’Connor.

CBS, and “60 Minutes” in particular, also deserve to be criticized. It has had its share of accused molesters working in the most important jobs in the company—Charlie Rose, Jeff Fager, and Les Moonves—yet it never has time to turn its “60 Minutes” cameras on them. In August, Brian Steinberg, writing for *Variety*, said, “The allegations are worthy of an investigation by ‘60 Minutes’—if only they weren’t about the news division that produces the show.”

Dozens of women have accused Rose, the CBS anchor and pundit, of sexual misconduct—he allegedly likes to expose himself—dating back to 1986. According to a *Washington Post* blog story, “Rumors about Rose’s behavior have circulated for years.”

One of Rose’s assistants, Kyle Godfrey-Ryan, “recalled at least a dozen instances where Rose walked nude in front of her while she worked in one of his New York City homes.” He also

made sexually charged phone calls to the then-21-year-old late at night or in the early morning.

Did she report it? Yes, she told Yvette Vega, Rose's long-time executive producer. "She [Vega] would just shrug and just say, 'That's just Charlie being Charlie.'" To show what a class act Rose was, when he found out that Godfrey-Ryan told a mutual friend about his behavior, he fired her.

Before he became chairman of CBS News in 2011, Fager was the executive producer of "60 Minutes." He then took over the reins at "60 Minutes" again in 2015. He has been accused by six women of sexual misconduct, especially when he was drunk. Fager is also accused of covering up for his sexually compromised workplace buddies who reported to him.

Moonves was CBS chief executive for 20 years; it ended in September when he stepped down amidst serious sexual misconduct allegations. He has also been accused of promoting several men known for their sexual misconduct. This may sound familiar: CBS quietly paid settlements to the women who complained.

Just recently, it was reported that more than 250 women who work at CBS have spoken to investigators. Some, however, refuse to talk because they don't trust the company.

Not only will CBS not authorize "60 Minutes" to disclose the depth of its own sexual abuse scandal, it has the nerve to claim that all priests are engaged in a cover-up. The "60 Minutes" producer of the O'Connor segment, Guy Campanile, told CBS News that "the church is made of people, but the ones in charge are priests [evidently they are not people] and priests are so good at keeping secrets."

Would that include New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan, who outed Theodore McCarrick? It wasn't the media which did that. Moreover, just recently Dolan made public some accusations against one of his auxiliary bishops, stemming from alleged

offenses that occurred decades ago. Does CBS—or any media outlet in the nation—have a program like the New York archdiocese that outs suspected abusers? Why not?

NBC is just as phony. Its Buffalo affiliate, WGRZ-TV, has unveiled a petition asking the public to pressure the Buffalo diocese to publicly release the full list of accused priests. If it were serious about the issue of sexual abuse—and not “getting the Church”—it would begin by pressing NBC to make public a list of all those employees who have been accused of sexual misconduct.

After all, Matt Lauer is hardly the only NBC employee to have been accused of being a predator. Last year, *Variety* wrote the following. “Lauer’s conduct was not a secret among other employees at ‘Today,’ numerous sources say. At least one of the anchors would gossip about stories she had heard, spreading them among the staff. ‘Management sucks there,’ says a former reporter....They protected the s*** out of Matt Lauer.”

Addie Zinone, who worked for Lauer, and media critic Ken Auletta, confirm that many others knew something was wrong. Joe Scarborough, co-host of MSNBC’s “Morning Joe,” had this to say about Lauer. “The whole theme was that he does the show and then he has sex with people, with employees. So this was whispered behind closed doors? No, it was shouted from the mountaintops and everybody laughed about it.” Including, evidently, Scarborough, who never said a public word about it.

Jessica Steyers, who worked at NBC Sports, has spoken out about the constant harassment by coworkers, and the nonchalant reaction by executives. Karin Roland, a feminist who has examined NBC, says “this happens as the result of a culture and a pattern of protecting stars and making them untouchable.”

It is striking to read the accounts of those in the media who try desperately to exonerate their colleagues. Take Mr. “60

Minutes” himself, Jeff Fager. He said that “it is wrong that our culture can be falsely defined by a few people with an axe to grind who are using an important movement as a weapon to get even, and not the hundreds of women and men that have thrived, both personally and professionally.”

He is probably right about that. There are accusers who have an axe to grind. We know that some of the women at the Fox News Network who brought charges against men in senior positions never said a word about the offenses when they allegedly happened—they opened their mouths when it was opportunistic for them to do so.

The same could be said about some of those who wait decades to bring charges against priests—usually when there is big money available—but no one in the media is going to look into that issue. Even bringing it up is considered unfair. Most important, it is a lot more than “hundreds of women and men that have thrived” in the Catholic Church—there are literally millions of young boys and girls who have done so—but no one in New York or Hollywood has the guts to highlight the successes.

Most of the sexual abuse in the Catholic Church occurred in the last century, primarily between 1965 and 1985. But when it comes to sexual abuse in Hollywood and in the media, it is as bad today as it ever was. Lucky for them there is little interest in outing the dregs among them. They’d rather focus on accused priests from a half-century ago.

TWO NEWSPAPERS TARGET BISHOPS

The *Boston Globe* and the *Philadelphia Inquirer* published a 5400-word article on November 4 discussing how the bishops

have handled sexual abuse matters since the Dallas norms were published on this subject in 2002.

The front-page story in the *Globe* shows a photo of four bishops: Bishop Robert Finn, Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, Archbishop John Nienstedt, and Bishop Richard Malone. It says all of them “resisted calls for transparency.” This is factually inaccurate: only McCarrick has done so.

Regarding Kansas City-St. Joseph Bishop Finn, who resigned in 2015, the article says, “He never alerted authorities about photos of young girls’ genitals stashed on a pastor’s laptop. He kept parishioners in the dark, letting the priest mingle with children and families.” It notes that he was found guilty (of a misdemeanor, it should be noted) for failing to report the priest’s suspected child abuse.

Here is what the newspapers did not tell their readers.

- In 2010, a computer technician found disturbing crotch-shot photos of girls fully clothed on the computer of Father Shawn Ratigan; there was one naked photo of a non-sexual nature.
- Even though there was no complainant, a police officer and an attorney were contacted by diocesan officials. They both agreed that the single naked photo did not constitute pornography.
- After Ratigan attempted suicide, he was evaluated by a psychiatrist—at the request of Finn. Ratigan was diagnosed as depressed, but not a pedophile.
- Finn put restrictions on Ratigan, which he broke. The diocese then contacted the authorities, though it had no legal mandate to do so.
- When it was found that Ratigan was again using a computer, an examination revealed hundreds of offensive photos.
- The Vicar General, Msgr. Robert Murphy, then called the cops (Finn was out of town).
- A week later Ratigan was arrested.

On what basis do these two newspapers claim that Bishop Finn “resisted calls for transparency”? Had it not been for the diocese calling a police officer and an attorney, this case would not have gone forward. And had it not been for the diocese calling the cops when Ratigan failed to abide by the restrictions placed on him, no one would have known about him. The priest never touched or abused a child, though it is clear that he is a disturbed person.

The newspapers say that Minneapolis-St. Paul Archbishop John Nienstedt was warned in 2009 by canon lawyer Jennifer Haselberger not to promote Father Curtis Wehmeyer. In 2010, the priest abused two brothers, 12 and 14, during a camping trip. Haselberger quit in protest in 2013 and contacted the authorities. The archdiocese was subsequently charged with ignoring Wehmeyer’s sexual misconduct and Nienstedt stepped down.

Here is what the newspapers did not tell their readers.

- In 2004, three years after being ordained, Wehmeyer made sexually suggestive remarks to two men, 19 and 20, but they never complained. The archdiocese found out and sent the priest for counseling. Two years later he was found cruising in an area known for gay sex. Though neither of these instances involved breaking the law, they were the kind of red flags that concerned Haselberger.
- Regarding the abuse of the two boys in 2010, the mother of the boys told a priest about it in early June 2012. He urged her to call the cops. On June 14, she provided the details and was told to report it to the archdiocese. On June 19, she met with church officials and one of the boys was questioned. On June 20, the police were contacted. On June 21, the priest was relieved of his duties. In September, the Ramsey County Attorney commended the archdiocese saying, “They did the right thing.”

On what basis do these two newspapers claim that Archbishop

Nienstedt “resisted calls for transparency”? Furthermore, there is no report of Nienstedt voluntarily stepping down in 2014 when he was accused of touching a young man’s buttocks in 2009 while posing for a Confirmation picture. He was exonerated by the Ramsey County Attorney’s Office on March 11, 2014.

The newspapers say that Buffalo Bishop Malone covered up cases of abuse. They cite no examples, relying on allegations made against him by his former executive assistant, a person who has quickly turned into an activist.

“I’m a man who can make a mistake,” Malone is quoted as saying in the November 5 edition of the *Buffalo News*, “and that is what I did in two cases where we had allegations of misconduct by a priest with adults.” When asked about a New York State Attorney General probe, he said, “I’m glad that is happening. Absolutely, bring it on.” That doesn’t sound like someone who is “resisting calls for transparency.”

There are many other parts of the story as reported by the *Boston Globe* and *Philadelphia Inquirer* that deserve rebuttal, but for now let it be said that their account is incomplete, misleading, and in some cases, downright irresponsible.

POLLS, PERCEPTION, AND THE POPE

A poll by CBS of American Catholics reveals that Pope Francis is no longer receiving the high marks he once enjoyed, especially with regards to his handling of clergy sexual abuse. Three years ago, roughly half of Catholics thought he was doing a good job dealing with this issue, but now only 29%

feel this way. It has even led about a quarter of Catholics to question whether they will remain in the Church.

These results are not good, but they are not as bad as they seem.

Current reports of past instances of sexual abuse have had no serious effect on 70% of Catholics (they are not contemplating leaving). The figure is even higher for those who regularly attend Mass; conversely, those who only occasionally attend Mass are the most prone to question whether they will remain in the Church.

Moreover, fully 10% of those polled say they never go to Church, yet their response to survey questions count as much as those who attend Mass more than once a week. Thus, these respondents skew the findings in a negative direction.

Perhaps the most revealing question and answer in the survey is the following: How serious a problem is sexual abuse of children by priests in the Catholic Church today?

Very serious	69%
Somewhat serious	21%
Not that serious	7%
Don't know/No answer	4%

If this question had been asked between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s, the results would likely have been reverse: we would expect that approximately 7% would say there is a "very serious" problem, and roughly 69% would say it is "not that serious."

Here is the paradox: the timeline just cited is exactly the period when most of the sexual abuse of minors took place, but few were aware of it. It therefore had no real effect on Catholics. Today, there is almost no abuse taking place: in the last two years for which we have data, the average percent of the clergy found to have had a credible (not proven)

accusation against them is .005%. Yet the alarms are going off now.

In 1928, sociologist W.I. Thomas provided insight into this phenomenon. "If men define situations as real," he wrote, "they are real in their consequences." Ergo, if Catholics perceive the issue of sexual abuse to be a big problem today—even though it is not—then it is.

The reason why Catholics believe there is a serious problem today has everything to do with media reports of sexual abuse. So as not to be misunderstood, the media are not to blame for reporting on the three most important reasons why so many Catholics (and obviously non-Catholics) have a false perception of reality: the McCarrick scandal, the Pennsylvania grand jury report on clergy abuse, and the resignation of Cardinal Donald Wuerl.

Most of Theodore McCarrick's predatory behavior took place in the 1980s. The lion's share of the predatory behavior reported in the Pennsylvania grand jury report took place in the last century. Cardinal Wuerl had a better record of handling this issue than most bishops and cardinals, but because he was the "big fish" cited in the report, he paid a price for a few bad judgments that he made in the last century.

As for the pope, his handling of the McCarrick scandal accounts for his low numbers.

Here is a question no one asks: Why did the media have something to report on in the first place?

Most Catholics, and most of the public as well, don't realize that the reason why we know about McCarrick is because of a reporting program instituted by Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York. It was his program dealing with sexual abuse that inspired one of McCarrick's victims to come forward. Dolan acted on that accusation and the rest is history.

The Pennsylvania grand jury report was not launched because of a widespread problem of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church today. No, it was done because Pennsylvania Attorney General Kathleen Kane, awaiting jail time, decided to go after the Catholic Church and open a statewide investigation of past practices merely because of reports that one teacher at a Catholic high school in the northwestern part of the state had been an abuser.

This is why we contend that Catholics are being played.

Is there a single institution in the United States, religious or secular, that has conducted an internal review of sexual misconduct that comes even close to what the Catholic Church has done? Is there a prominent leader in any institution that has turned in one of his own leaders, the way Cardinal Dolan turned in McCarrick?

Why has Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro stood behind a grand jury report that is strewn with palpable lies and unsubstantiated accusations? Why did he single out the Catholic Church for a probe, destroying the reputation of innocent men (this, and other issues, is why the Catholic League filed a brief in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court)? Why has he shown no interest in pursuing the sexual abuse of minors that is going on right now in Pennsylvania public schools?

Why have the media shown little or no interest in pursuing sexual abuse of minors committed by anyone other than a priest? This is disgraceful.

Perception may function as reality, as W.I. Thomas instructed, but misperceptions are not analogous to truth. Truth does not turn on interpretation.

WASHINGTON POST MAKES FALSE CLAIMS

In the first paragraph of the November 13 editorial in the Washington Post, it says that the sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church “raged unchecked for decades and, even after it was exposed in 2002 by the Boston Globe, has been met by the church hierarchy with denial, temporizing, stone walling and half-measures.” That is factually wrong.

Indeed, during this time span, no institution in America, religious or secular, has had less of a problem with the sexual abuse of minors than the Catholic Church.

Here are the data on the number of clergymen (priests and deacons) who have had a credible accusation (not substantiated) made against them during the year listed.

2004	22
2005	9
2006	14
2007	4
2008	10
2009	6
2010	7
2011	9
2012	6
2013	9
2014	6
2015	7
2016	2
2017	6

Average: 8.36

Consider the most recent reports on this subject, covering the last two years for which we have data: .005 percent of the clergy have had a credible accusation made against them.

There is no basis in reality for the *Washington Post* to conclude that the Dallas norms adopted by the bishops in 2002 have not worked. Clearly they have. Here's why.

Review boards staffed by professionals in several fields are empowered to deal with accusations. Once an allegation is deemed credible (the bar is quite low) the accused must step aside pending an investigation. Moreover, virtually every person who works or volunteers for the Church must undergo training programs learning how to combat the sexual abuse of minors.

Also, many dioceses now have programs that invite alleged victims to come forward in pursuit of justice. It was just such a program that led Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York, to turn in a sitting cardinal (McCarrick), as well as one of his auxiliary bishops. What institution can match these initiatives? Certainly not the public schools, about which we hear nothing from those who never stop bashing the Catholic Church.

There is much work to be done, but fair-minded assessments of the progress that has been made since the Dallas reforms would not concur with the misinformed editorial in the *Washington Post*.

PORTLAND LIBRARY HOSTS PERVERTS FOR KIDS

On October 23, a public library in Portland, Oregon hosted an event for children 2-6 years old that featured perverts and Catholic bashers. The venue was the Multnomah County Library.

“Drag Queen Storytime with the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence” was the name of the event. The “Sisters” have a long tradition of mocking nuns and bashing Catholicism; they are popular in San Francisco. Now they have set their sights on little kids.

Here is how the event was billed. “The library is proud to present an hour of kid-friendly drag! Join us for this special storytime featuring the fabulous Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, Sister Donna and Sister Olive, reading stories about inclusion and diversity, followed by a craft or dance party. For kids 2-6 years old with a favorite adult.”

This is one more example of some very disturbed people using sexuality as a means of getting to kids. That they used taxpayer dollars to advance their sickness is even less defensible.

By using the much-abused, and highly politicized, term “inclusion and diversity,” the drag queens tried to legitimize their behavior. But nothing can justify trying to sexualize children—even in a manner that is not perverse. The goal, of course, is to normalize sexual abnormalities, as well as anti-Catholic bigotry, two phenomena that deserve to be checked, not celebrated.

The library is to blame for not giving high profile to this event. If they are proud of having perverts and bigots address kids, they should shout it from the rooftop. Cowards and sickos.

TRUMP FINALIZES CONSCIENCE RIGHTS

When giving the Commencement Address at the University of Notre Dame in 2009, President Barack Obama said, "Let's honor the conscience of those who disagree with abortion, and draft a sensible conscience clause." His administration never did. Worse, it sought to violate conscience rights of pro-life Americans.

When Donald Trump was running for president in 2016, he pledged to undo the damage that his predecessor did to conscience rights. Now he has made good on his promise. On November 7, his administration released final rules on conscience rights for Americans who object to paying for abortion-inducing drugs and contraceptives in their insurance plans. They will take effect two months from now.

President Trump had to undo the Health and Human Services mandate established by the Obama administration. That provision sought to force organizations such as the Little Sisters of the Poor to violate their conscience by paying for morally objectionable services in their health insurance plans.

Under the new rules, an exemption is being afforded "from the contraceptive coverage mandate to entities and individuals that object to services covered by the mandate on the basis of sincerely held religious beliefs." The rules are inclusive of "nonprofit organizations, small businesses, and individuals that have non-religious moral convictions."

Kudos to President Trump for affirming religious liberty and conscience rights.

GOOD NIGHT AT THE POLLS FOR CHRISTIANS

Election night was good for Christians. In two of the three states that had ballot initiatives protecting the rights of the unborn, they won: Alabama and West Virginia affirmed the right to life of children in the womb, and they also banned public funding of abortion; Oregon made it easier for a woman to abort her child.

Alabama voters affirmed religious liberty by ensuring that a person's religious beliefs will have no effect on his civil or political rights; they also voted to allow a display of the Ten Commandments on public property.

Pro-life candidates squared off against abortion-rights candidates in the 36 states that had gubernatorial races. In September, National Right to Life listed 26 of the races as the ones to watch. Our own tally found that the pro-life candidate won 17 of those races; 9 were won by the abortion-rights candidate.

This takes on more significance when we consider that Planned Parenthood launched its largest voter contact campaign for midterm elections in history.

NARAL told voters that abortion is a children's rights issue. "The research is clear. Restricting abortion access doesn't just harm women. It harms their children as well." It also tweeted, "When women are denied abortions, it affects the lives of the kids they already have."

NARAL is right about that, but for the wrong reason: it traumatizes children to learn that their mother aborted their

prospective brother or sister—they realize that it could have been them!

Perhaps the best election news is the uptick in pro-life senators. President Trump will now have an easier time getting judges appointed who are not given to discovering rights that are nowhere mentioned in the Constitution.