

MILITANT SECULARISTS REBUKED; FIRESTORM ERUPTS

Faithful America, a radical secularist entity, recently initiated an ethics complaint against Attorney General William Barr; it also launched a petition drive in support of this campaign. We countered with a petition drive of our own in support of Barr. On the same day, these left-wing radicals chided a Catholic priest for denying Joe Biden Holy Communion. We struck back, telling the head of this entity, an Episcopalian priest, to butt out.

These militant secularists asked the Justice Department's Inspector General and Office of Professional Responsibility to investigate Barr for allegedly violating his duty to guarantee religious liberty. This was a scam: its real purpose was to intimidate Barr from speaking out again in favor of religious liberty. As we informed the public, Faithful America would not exist without the initial funding of atheist billionaire George Soros.

In his October address at Notre Dame Law School, Barr warned about the efforts of militant secularists to destroy our Judeo-Christian heritage. Ironically, Faithful America proved him right: it did exactly what he said these fanatics do—try to silence the free speech and religious liberty rights of truly faithful Americans.

The Episcopalian priest, Rev. Nathan Empsall, got into the act by lecturing Catholics on the Church's teachings on Holy Communion. Thus did he violate an unspoken rule observed by religious leaders: do not interfere in the affairs of another religion. We called him "an embarrassment."

Empsall was furious when a South Carolina priest, Fr. Robert Morey, denied Joe Biden Holy Communion because of his rabid

advocacy of abortion rights. If this Protestant minister likes abortion, that is his business, but he has no right to impose his secularist agenda on Catholics.

When Catholic League supporters answered our email request to contact Empsall about his petition drive—he asked Father Morey’s bishop to direct the priest to apologize to Biden—it set off a firestorm. The crazy Catholic haters on the left exploded in anger at us. But the only effect it had was to inspire us to double down.

Empsall’s campaign was laughable. He is a tool of the left, and we let him know that he crossed the line. Faithful America has a history of trying to sow discord in the Catholic community, which is one of Soros’ goals. They need to be put in their place, and no lay Catholic organization has the guts to do this save for the Catholic League.

Faithful America has been asleep for years. If its fat-cat donors think they can jump start it by bullying Catholics, they are sadly mistaken. We will checkmate them any day of the week.

CHRISTMAS TREE RETURNS

Two weeks before Thanksgiving, by a vote of 64-30, the Wisconsin Assembly voted to call the Christmas tree in the state Capitol rotunda a Christmas tree. The governor, Tony Evers, wanted it called a “holiday tree.” The Assembly also voted to adopt a resolution recognizing Thanksgiving week as National Bible Week.

The Christian haters at Freedom From Religion Foundation were appalled by both decisions.

Why would Evers want to insult Christians at Christmastime? One website which features his bio says that his religion is "Not Available." We can only guess what that means. We know of no people of faith who believe that it is okay to intentionally allow a baby to die who survives a botched abortion. Evers does.

His official bio says "the governor believes in bringing people together to solve the problems facing our state." Is that what he did in June when he divided the people by putting a homosexual "Rainbow Pride Flag" over the State Capitol? It led to a petition of 10,000 residents who objected.

Evers has a history of anti-Catholicism. Before he became governor, he was the Wisconsin Superintendent of Public Instruction. In that role he sought to deny Catholic students who attended an independent Catholic school transportation, even though the school was affiliated with the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. He was sued for his bigoted stunt.

Kudos to the Wisconsin lawmakers who stood up to these bullies, and to their lackey, Tony Evers.

GEORGETOWN'S PITIFUL CONFERENCE ON ABUSE

William A. Donohue

In November, a report was released based on the proceedings of a Georgetown University event that took place in June. Titled, "National Convening on Lay Leadership for a Wounded Church and Divided Nation," it was organized by the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life, headed by John Carr

and Kim Daniels. The issue before the gathering was the clergy sexual abuse scandal.

The report aptly noted that “The Church’s moral credibility has been seriously wounded by the abuse crisis, and bishops no longer possess the moral standing they once enjoyed in public life.” It could also be said that the intellectual credibility of the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life has been seriously wounded by this venture.

The report lists 10 recommendations on how to address clergy sexual abuse, most of which are pedestrian. How creative is it for the report to list such things as “Focus on Gospel mission and build unity”? Another ground-breaking suggestion is, “Be both humble and bold.” A real throw-away line is the advice to “Build partnerships and enhance collaboration among clergy and laypeople.” More vagueness is evident in their recommendation to “Develop a national collaboration among ministries.”

Such platitudes mean zero if not operationalized. How are these nebulous outcomes to be achieved? That’s where the rubber meets the road.

Most of the report centers on three issues: clericalism, diversity, and the laity, none of which has anything to do with why young males were abused by priests. The rights of accused priests were not mentioned.

Ever since the Vatican summit earlier this year, clericalism has emerged as the number-one talking point in establishment Catholic circles. Clericalism may have something to do with why some bishops were enablers, but it is of no explanatory value understanding why priests abused young males. Invoking clericalism is a dodge: its purpose is to direct the conversation away from the molesting priests. That way the subject of homosexuality can be skirted.

This is so thoroughly dishonest. If 81 percent of the victims were male and 78 percent were postpubescent, that means that

homosexual priests are responsible for most of the problem. This does not mean that all gay priests are molesters—they are not—but it does mean that gay priests are responsible for most of the abuse.

It is commonly said that many of the priests who engaged in gay sex with their victims did not identify themselves as gay. So what? It would be like saying that an Irishman who has a drinking problem is not Irish because he thinks he is an Italian. What matters is that just as the Irish are overrepresented among alcoholics, gay priests are overrepresented among sexual abusers. To pretend otherwise is deceitful.

Similarly, diversity has absolutely nothing to do with clergy sexual abuse. Having more minorities and persons from different economic strata participate in the affairs of the Church are worthy goals, but so is combating spousal abuse. Recommendations that are unrelated to the problem are positively useless.

There is great irony in a conference of lay Catholics saying that terms like “Your Eminence” and “Your Excellency” need to be retired—they smack of clericalism—while demanding a greater role for themselves. This reads like a textbook power grab. Lay clericalism is hardly less of a problem.

Any recommendations to curb clergy sexual abuse that do not address the link between dissidence and abuse is absurd. Where do they think the Paul Shanleys of the Church got their ideas, and the brazenness to act on their worst impulses? From orthodox Church teachings on sexuality?

Of course the organizers of this event don’t see the link between dissent and abuse: they work for Georgetown University, home to two pro-abortion student groups. That they singled out the *National Catholic Reporter* for praise—it rejects the Church’s teachings on sexuality—shows how utterly

clueless they are.

Even worse, Carr and Daniels welcomed as participants some who have worked tirelessly to undermine the Church. One of the moderators, in fact, is a man who taught the secular media how to subvert the bishops during their “Fortnight for Freedom” events. His name is John Gehring, a tool of George Soros.

Why was Terrence McKiernan chosen to be at the event? Are Carr and Daniels aware that he has lied about Cardinal Timothy Dolan, accusing the archbishop of New York of hiding 55 predatory priests?

Alexia Kelley is another curious invitee. What did they expect that a person who worked for Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good would bring to the table? This discredited and defunct organization, another Soros entity, showed up in the infamous Wikileaks document as an institution created for the express purpose of undermining the Catholic Church.

After reading this report, I am having second thoughts about awarding the laity more power. Consider what Michael Sean Winters of the *National Catholic Reporter* had to say about this subject.

He warned his fellow left-wing Catholics that “if there were elections for lay leaders, it is more likely than not that Bill Donohue and George Weigel and Raymond Arroyo would win at the Catholic polls.”

Let’s start the early voting now.

THE ACLU AT 100

Bill Donohue

This is an excerpt from a longer paper by the same name. It can be found on the Catholic League website.

The ACLU will celebrate its centennial on January 20, 2020. Always contentious, it has become the most influential civil liberties organization in the nation. Its reputation as a non-partisan organization that vigorously defends the free speech rights of all Americans, independent of their ideology or political leanings, is well known. However, it is a reputation that can be seriously challenged. Indeed, as I detailed in *The Politics of the American Civil Liberties Union* (Transaction Press, 1985), it would be more accurate to say that the Union is the legal arm of the liberal-left.

Its reputation as a force for freedom can also be seriously challenged. As I argued in *Twilight of Liberty: The Legacy of the ACLU* (Transaction Press, 1994; new material was published in the 2001 edition), the Union entertains a vision of liberty that is increasingly libertine: its promotion of radical individualism works to undermine the kind of moral consensus that is a bedrock of free societies.

Today the ACLU leadership contends that the organization has been a consistent non-partisan catalyst for freedom since it was founded by ten distinguished Americans. This is factually wrong. There was only one founder of the ACLU: Roger Baldwin. Any organization that lies about its founding is not likely to tell the truth about other matters.

The ACLU was nominally founded to defend free speech rights, but its real interest was the rights of labor. Baldwin pushed the ACLU to the radical fringe of the labor movement, leading Samuel Gompers, head of the American Federation of Labor, to accuse him of aiding and abetting revolutionary movements.

Baldwin was a Communist fellow-traveler.

Baldwin traveled to the “workers’ paradise” and in 1928 released a glowing account of what he saw. The title of his book, *Liberty Under the Soviets*, accurately conveyed his message. In 1934, he wrote an article for *Soviet Russia Today* that made plain his sympathies. He vigorously defended Stalinism.

Then, in 1939, Baldwin experienced the “biggest shock of my life.” That was when he learned of the Nazi-Soviet pact. When I interviewed him in 1978, he told me that the pact meant that “the distinction between Communism and Fascism [was] no longer tenable.” It also meant that he had to seriously reconsider the propriety of having members of the Communist Party on its board of directors; he worked to get one thrown out of the ACLU.

During World War II, President Roosevelt ordered the internment of 110,000 Japanese Americans. Today the ACLU likes to brag how it challenged this initiative. On its website it lists over twelve highlights in its history. One of them reads, “The ACLU stood almost alone in denouncing the federal government’s internment of more than 110,000 Japanese Americans in concentration camps.”

This is pure myth. It is true that the Northern California affiliate opposed the internment, but the national organization did not—it defended the removal of anyone from military zones whose presence may endanger national security.

Though the ACLU took a moderate position on many issues in the 1940s and 1950s, in the 1960s it resorted back to its more radical ways. It was on social and economic issues that it turned decisively left. Egalitarians on the ACLU’s board started lobbying for economic rights, and in 1984 succeeded in developing a policy declaring poverty to be a civil liberties issue.

Does a homeless person have the right to sleep on sidewalks? What if the temperature falls below freezing and the police ask him to seek shelter, and he refuses to move? The ACLU says the homeless have a constitutional right to stay put. When this policy was implemented in the 1980s in New York City, three homeless persons froze to death—as a direct result of the ACLU’s “Project Freeze” policy.

As proof of its influence today, consider that the Chicago police force has been required to adopt the ACLU’s vision of crime control. In a consent decree, whose strictures were written by the ACLU, the cops must prepare mountains of paperwork, slowing down their response to crime. The result? Chicago is one of the most violent cities in the nation.

Making matters worse is the ACLU’s push to legalize *all* drugs. It also wants to legalize street prostitution, pornography, and gambling. Only someone drunk on individual rights would conclude that such activities contribute to the makings of a free society.

The ACLU is known as a strong proponent of women’s rights. What is less well known is that opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment was long considered a pro-women position. For decades, beginning in the 1920s, the ACLU argued that women had enough rights enshrined in the Constitution, and did not need the ERA. The same radical judge on the ACLU’s board who led the fight against the ERA did a quick pivot in 1970: She insisted that women could not be free without it. That is when the ACLU changed its position.

The women’s right that the ACLU treasures above all is abortion.

In the late 1970s, Rep. Henry Hyde authored a bill restricting the federal funding of abortion. The ACLU, determined to cast his effort as an attempt to shove Roman Catholic doctrine down the throats of the public, summoned a lawyer to follow him

into church on Sunday. She entered her spy notes in a 301-page brief, which got nowhere. When asked about this, Hyde said, "I suppose the Nazis did that—observed Jews going into the synagogues in Hitler's Germany—but I had hoped we would have gotten past that kind of fascistic tactic."

What the ACLU did to Hyde was no mistake. When it was founded in 1920, it listed ten objectives, including all the rights detailed in the First Amendment, with one exception: freedom of religion. This was no oversight. Baldwin, and many of his colleagues, were atheists.

Freedom from religion has always played a much bigger role for the ACLU than freedom of religion. The list of religious expressions it objects to is quite long. In the 1980s, it worked to strip the Catholic Church of its tax-exempt status. It continues to this day trying to censor religious speech on public property, including nativity scenes. It is so terrified of religion that it has even objected to a nine-foot underwater statue of Jesus Christ placed three miles off the coast of Key Largo.

If there is one civil liberty that the ACLU is most known for defending, it is freedom of speech. It took only a few years after its founding to prove how insincere it was.

In December 1936, Harold Lord Varney wrote a critical piece about the ACLU in the *American Mercury*, an influential journal of opinion. The article, "The Civil Liberties Union—Liberalism à la Moscow," was a searing indictment of the ACLU's alleged non-partisan position. Most of what Varney said was undeniably true, but some of his comments exaggerated the Union's record. There certainly was nothing libelous about it.

Upon publication, the ACLU threatened a libel suit. This incident has been wholly ignored for decades by those who write about the organization, and by the ACLU itself. It amounts to a cover-up.

Varney seized on Baldwin's praise for the Soviet Union. "Repression in Western democracies are violations of professed constitutional liberties and I condemn them as such. Repressions in Soviet Russia are weapons of struggle in a transition period to Socialism." This, and similar statements like it, are what irked Varney. What followed was a series of hot exchanges between the ACLU and Varney. Then came the libel suit. It was not dropped until a compromise was reached, allowing both sides to save face.

In more recent times, the ACLU has been quick to hail its defense of neo-Nazis as evidence of its non-partisan approach. But everyone knows that these nuts pose no real threat. More seriously, why is the ACLU reluctant to defend the free speech rights of pro-life demonstrators, or conservative speakers on college campuses?

When it comes to other issues, its position on free speech is so far gone that it actually defends the sale and distribution of child pornography. It lost in a unanimous decision in the Supreme Court in 1982.

The author of the First Amendment, James Madison, never envisioned that freedom of speech would come to mean the defense of child pornography. Nor did he think that free speech would include dwarf-tossing, mud wrestling, sleeping in parks, and the right of demonstrators to block traffic on bridges. These are all official policies of the ACLU.

Today the most vocal critic of the ACLU is Alan Dershowitz, the former Harvard Law professor. He argues that he hasn't changed, the ACLU has; he charges that it has become increasingly political. I would say that it has reverted back to its hyper-partisan beginnings.

Ever since Dershowitz left Harvard and moved back to New York, he has been at the forefront of legal controversies involving President Donald Trump. He has mostly defended the president

and has been relentless in calling out the ACLU—he was a former board member—for doing nothing in the face of gross constitutional injustices.

What irks Dershowitz are the numerous government raids on the homes, hotel rooms, and offices of those who have worked for the Trump administration. The authorities seized material protected by lawyer-client privilege. What has the ACLU done about it? Nothing. Why? Politics and money.

No one disagrees that the ACLU harbors a strong animus against Trump. The money aspect is less obvious.

Under ACLU president Anthony Romero today, fund-raising has become more important than ever before. Dershowitz maintains that “after Trump took office, the ACLU has never become so cash rich, yet principle poor.” What matters most is the profile of today’s donors.

“The problem is that most of that money is not coming from civil libertarians who care about free speech, due process, the rights of the accused and defending the unpopular,” Dershowitz notes. “It is coming from radical leftists in Hollywood, Silicon Valley, and other areas not known for a deep commitment to civil liberties.”

The ACLU has always been political, but not until recently has it jumped into the political arena with both feet. In 2018 it officially overthrew nearly 100 years of policy when it announced its foray into electoral politics. It pledged to spend more than twenty-five million dollars trying to affect the November elections.

Ira Glasser, who preceded Romero, was blown away by this decision. He told the *New Yorker* magazine that this was “a transformative change,” one that “has the capacity to destroy the organization as it has always existed.”

The moderates in the ACLU have largely been purged. It was on

the left from the beginning, but at least had its responsible moments. Now it is a totally politicized extremist organization, one that Roger Baldwin (whom I came to like), would not recognize.

MEASURE OF JUSTICE FOR CARDINAL PELL

Australia's highest court has given Cardinal George Pell a measure of justice by agreeing to hear his appeal. Convicted last December of molesting two choirboys in the 1990s, his case will now get a final hearing in the early part of 2020.

Pell has been defamed, wrongly convicted, and unjustly sentenced to solitary confinement. More than 20 witnesses took his side: they never saw anyone break ranks from a procession of choristers, altar servers and clerics to be with Pell in the back of a church, the supposed location of the abuse.

One of the two boys allegedly abused by Pell died of a drug overdose, but not before telling his mother—on two occasions—that Pell never molested him. So if he was not abused, neither was the complainant: they were allegedly abused at the same time and in the same place.

Keep Cardinal Pell in your prayers this Christmas season. There is still a glimmer of hope that justice will triumph in the end.

FOX HOST CRITICIZES PRIEST FOR DENYING BIDEN

Joe Biden, a self-proclaimed Catholic, was denied Holy Communion by a South Carolina priest because of his pro-abortion convictions. "Fox & Friends" host Brian Kilmeade criticized the priest for doing so.

Kilmeade, who is Catholic, decried the decision by the priest, calling it "an extremely negative thing." He also took issue with co-host Ainsley Earhardt, who is not Catholic, for suggesting that Biden was free to join some other church. "I think that's very judgmental," he said. He then ridiculed the idea that everyone who goes to Communion should have to get off the Communion line because he is guilty of some infraction of Church teachings. "Don't try to get Communion because you missed church on Sunday."

Kilmeade is right to say that denying Biden the Eucharist was "an extremely negative thing." It can also be said that Biden's persistent denial of Church teaching on abortion is "an extremely negative thing." Kilmeade is also right to say that Earhardt's suggestion that Biden is free to leave the Church was "very judgmental." Indeed it was. It was just as judgmental as his criticism of the priest.

Kilmeade's thesis—Catholics are going to get bounced off the Communion line—may play well in some circles, but he will not find one priest in the entire country who would ever equate skipping church with the intentional killing of innocents.

The key issue is whether the priest did the right thing.

Canon 915 of the Catholic Church says that those "who obstinately persist in manifest grave sin are not to be admitted to Holy Communion." Archbishop William J. Levada, writing for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

in 2004, cited Canon 915 in a statement he made on this issue. That certainly gives weight to the priest's decision.

However, Levada also cited Canon 912, which says, "Any baptized person who is not prohibited by law can and must be admitted to Holy Communion." His interpretation of this Canon is worth repeating. "The practice of the Church is to accept the conscientious self-appraisal of each person."

So here's the question. Did the priest who refused Biden Holy Communion have reason to believe that the former vice president has obstinately persisted in manifest grave sin by adopting the pro-abortion agenda?

It is incontrovertible that Biden is *more* pro-abortion today than he was in 2008. That was when vice president candidate Biden was told by the bishop of Scranton, Biden's home town, that he would be refused Holy Communion because of his enthusiasm for abortion rights. Since running for president, Biden has become more enthusiastic, saying he is now in favor of federal funding of abortion; he has also pledged to enshrine into federal law the Supreme Court ruling that legalized abortion.

Levada's document for the bishops says that "the prudent practice for ministers of Holy Communion" would be to refer to the bishop of the diocese what to do about pro-abortion politicians. But he also offers support for what the South Carolina priest did. "Ministers of Holy Communion may find themselves in the situation where they must refuse to distribute Holy Communion to someone in rare cases, such as in cases of a declared excommunication, interdict, or an 'obstinate persistence in manifest grave sin.'"

In other words, Mr. Kilmeade, it's a judgment call. Much could be resolved if the Fox host were to accept the Church's teaching that abortion is not just another sin. That's why it's called "intrinsically evil."

WARREN DECLARES WAR ON THE POOR

When it comes to education, there is no better way to punish the poor than to deny them the same opportunities the affluent have. Here's the drill: Keep the poor away from charter schools and away from private schools, especially Catholic schools in the inner city. Make sure to defend the unions to the hilt, knowing full well they will always put the best interests of teachers and administrators ahead of the best interests of students. And, best of all, reward failing schools with more money.

This is what Elizabeth Warren is doing—in the name of helping the poor she is declaring war on them. Forget about her intentions, the effect of her plan is to consign black and brown kids to schools that no sane white person would ever choose for his own kids.

Warren wants to spend another \$800 billion in federal dollars on elementary and secondary education, more than half of which would go to students from poor families. She offers no data that show how effective it is to spend more money on education, and that is because it doesn't exist.

A researcher at the Cato Institute, Andrew J. Coulson, studied the results of national assessment tests and correlated academic performance with state funding. He found “there is essentially no link between state education spending (which has exploded) and the performance of students at the end of high school (which has generally stagnated or declined).”

If money mattered, then students in the District of Columbia would be at the top of the academic charts—more money is spent

per capita on these students than is spent on students in any of the 50 states—yet they are always in last place. If the money=better academic achievement equation were true, states like New Hampshire and the Dakotas would be at the bottom, yet they are always near the top, notwithstanding meager funding per capita. Similarly, Alaska has one of the most well-funded school systems, yet ranks near the bottom in academic achievement.

Warren hates the one public school initiative that works, namely charter schools. She is now boasting that she will end more federal money for charter schools, and stop for-profit charters altogether. When confronted with evidence that charter schools in her home state of Massachusetts work well, she did not deny it. But data mean nothing to ideologues.

She also wants to make it easier for teachers to unionize, thus ensuring the poor will stay where they are (what is going on in Chicago is a textbook example). The public school establishment is opposed to every school choice program, yet the lack of competition—which works well in every other segment of the economy—effectively stops the poor from becoming upwardly mobile.

Someone needs to ask Warren why she wants to deny school choice to parents who live in D.C. when it is clear that this initiative works. For instance, the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program, which helps students from poor families to attend private schools, experienced a 21 percentage point increase in graduation rates.

Bill Donohue taught in a Catholic school in Spanish Harlem and saw firsthand how well poor Puerto Rican and African American students could do when presented with structure and a curricula focused on basic educational skills. There was no money for frills, no room for experimental programs, and no excessive administrative costs. But there was plenty of homework and plenty of discipline in the classroom. These

students did well not because of money, but because tried and true academic methods were the rule.

“With fully funded vouchers, parents of all income levels could send their children—and the accompanying financial support—to the schools of their choice.” So true. This is what Elizabeth Warren said in 2003.

She needs to explain what changed. What data made her the enemy of school choice? Absent empirical evidence, we are left with the impression that she is prepared to keep the poor in their place, just so she can win the support of the teachers’ unions.

PA REP. SIMS APOLOGIZES

Last spring, we called for the censure of Brian Sims, a member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, for verbally assaulting an innocent woman. He remained defiant, refusing to apologize. But he finally relented in late October.

On May 5, totally unprovoked, Sims accosted an elderly Catholic woman who was praying the rosary outside a Planned Parenthood abortion clinic in Philadelphia. He badgered her for eight minutes, telling her to go pray at home. On a previous occasion he became equally aggressive with attempting to intimidate three teenage girls who were protesting abortion outside the clinic. He is known for his vicious anti-Catholic rants.

Two days later we contacted every member of the state House of Representatives. After being told by the House Ethics Committee of the Pennsylvania legislature that our request to censure Sims did not meet the House Rules and Legislative Code

of Conduct (it deals mostly with conflict of interest violations), we changed course. We supported a resolution by Rep. Jerry Knowles, whom we had been working with, to censure Sims for his bigotry and bullying. Sims felt the pressure mounting, and when the lawmakers returned from summer break, he switched gears.

Knowles briefed us on the outcome shortly before Sims' decision was made public. He thanked us for our support. We are grateful for his courage.

Sims got off easy. He does not belong in government. But at least he was forced to apologize.

USA TODAY TRACKS FORMER PRIESTS

USA Today is on a tear against the Catholic Church. Last month it published a 3700-word-story on efforts by the bishops to fight discriminatory legislation. Now it has unloaded again, this time indicting the Church in a 6226-word-story for not tracking former priests accused of sexual abuse.

The newspaper must be vying for a Pulitzer. Why else would it invest a ton of money employing 39 reporters to investigate alleged wrongdoing by the Catholic Church over the last nine months, "wrongdoing" that is routine for every organization? What it found is hardly startling.

USA Today says that the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) does not track former priests accused of sexual abuse. That is correct. Neither does *USA Today* have a GPS tracking system to locate the whereabouts of former

employees accused of sexual misconduct. That's because no employer is required to do so by law. So why is it so stunning to learn that the USCCB plays by the same rules as everyone else? Unless, of course, the name of the game is to shame the Church?

The reporters found a priest who was accused of sexual abuse in the 1970s, and was later named in a settlement with the Miami Archdiocese. He is now 85. Is there more to this story? Nope, that's it.

Philadelphia has a Child and Family Therapy Training Center which offers clinical programs, workshops and courses. One of the faculty members who worked there was a former priest accused of sexual abuse.

Now whose fault is it that the Center didn't know of accusations against him? Why did they employ him to give lectures on sexual abuse? When his former boss was asked about him in 2015, she said he told her about the accusations, denied they were true, and she believed him. She said he was a "terrific teacher." He is currently a licensed marriage and family therapist. Why didn't the newspaper contact his employer for an interview? It had more than three dozen reporters on the story.

The news story opens with John Dagwell. He is a former Catholic brother who plead guilty in a criminal case in 1988 for molesting a student. "Despite his past," the news article says, "Dagwell was never required to register as a sex offender." With good reason—he didn't have to. Later in the story it is reported that there was no federal law requiring sex offenders to register at that time. So why the early drama about him not registering? In fact it wasn't until 2006 that the Congress passed such a law; it wasn't upheld by the Supreme Court until this past June.

Here's another gem. A layman at a Catholic high school entered

into a settlement agreement in 2013 with former students claiming abuse. The reporters quote a real estate agent who lives near him saying she can't believe his name doesn't show up in Florida's sex registry. Maybe that's because he was never found guilty. Didn't this occur to the reporters? Do they know what the law says?

According to FindLaw, a trusted legal online source, the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act makes it a federal crime "to knowingly fail to register with a state's authorities, or to fail to update registration at specified times, in accordance with the law's requirements."

In other words, it is up to the convicted—*not the accused or the former employer*—to register. Knowing this to be true, why didn't *USA Today* make this plain? Let me guess: To do so would have imploded its story.

The newspaper could have written a similar story on virtually any organization, but instead it chose only one. It needs to explain to Catholics why.

SUPPORT THE SALVATION ARMY

No organization does a better job of helping the homeless at Christmastime than the Salvation Army. This year it came under attack by homosexuals and the sexually confused, arguing that it is not supportive of their politics. It is not supposed to be. The Salvation Army is a Christian charity.

The attacks started two weeks before Thanksgiving when a singer, Ellie Goulding from England, threatened not to sing at a Dallas Cowboys halftime show on Thanksgiving Day: she demanded that the Salvation Army pledge to support the

homosexual cause. Thus would she deprive the needy of support unless her ideological goals were met.

We encourage all Catholics to give more to the Salvation Army this year than ever before. Send a message to those who would deny the poor a decent Christmas, all in the name of their selfish agenda.