

# CHRISTMAS AD CANCELLED; CENSORED BY EDUCATION ELITES

We became the latest victim of the cancel culture when education elites refused to run our ad with a pro-Christmas message. To read the ad that the elites couldn't stomach, click [here](#).

The appeal letter that members got in October was a request for funds to pay for a pro-Christmas ad that would be sent to educators. We did our best to secure space in six publications, but in the end we hit a brick wall. Funds raised were deposited in our operating account.

In late September, we sent the ad that Bill Donohue wrote to the marketing and advertising departments of *Education Week*, the National Association of Education, *Scholastic* magazine and the *American School Board Journal*. None of the four got back to us. *Education Next* offered us a spot in its quarterly publication, but that was not practical given our desire to affect decision making in time for Christmas celebrations. One publication, *Education Leadership*, simply rejected the ad.

On Sept. 29, we received what appeared to be promising news from the American Association of School Superintendents and Administrators (AASA).

"The content of your E-blast is subject to AASA review and approval. We often have minor feedback once the team reviews, so I would anticipate a round or two of edits before the message deploys. We will ensure ample time to do so and we have never had an instance when E-blast was prevented from deploying on schedule."

Our director of communications, Mike McDonald, then contacted the agent at AASA to find out how we should pay for the ad. He also asked for further assurance that the ad has been

approved. We were told that we could pay by credit card and that *"your ad has been approved and will not be rejected."*

The ad was scheduled to be digitally distributed on November 13. But on November 6, we received the following email. "I am very sorry to share this news, but, per our Media Kit, AASA has rejected your ad for the **DEDICATED EBLAST on November 13, 2020**. I regret to share we are ***officially cancelling this contract*** for that reason."

Here is what Bill Donohue told the press: "Having spent 20 years in education, teaching every grade from the second through graduate school, I am not shocked by the outcome. As I have said on many occasions, there is more free speech allowed in local pubs than there is on local college campuses."

It is obvious that the schools want nothing to do with celebrations of Christians, and this certainly includes Christmas.

---

## SERRA VANDALS MUST PAY

The Catholic League has asked the District Attorney of Marin County, California to "apply the full measure of the law" to hold accountable the six vandals who toppled the statue of St. Junípero Serra in San Rafael this fall.

Bill Donohue wrote to D.A. Lori E. Frugoli saying that the Catholic League fully supports the efforts made by San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone to seek justice. It is outrageous that St. Serra, who long championed the human rights of Native Americans, defending them from atrocities at the hands of Spanish colonizers, would be disrespected.

We sent Frugoli a copy of a lengthy booklet on the deeds of Fr. Serra that was written by Donohue. He details the work of noted historians on this subject, showing how incredibly courageous the 18th century priest was. He not only fought for an end to oppression, he did more to defend the rights of women than anyone at the time.

It was not just in San Rafael where the vandals targeted St. Serra. Thugs toppled statues in many parts of California. Donohue told the D.A. that “attacks on his likeness are not from oppressed peoples seeking justice, but rather violent hordes....” Their goal is to intimidate Catholics.

Donohue ended by backing up Archbishop Cordileone’s position that “this attack on a cherished religious symbol on our church property is not a minor property crime, but an attack on Catholics as a people.”

---

## **BUCKLE YOUR SEAT BELTS—AGAIN**

Here is a portion of how I began my “President’s Desk” essay in the December 2008 edition of *Catalyst*.

“We have been in the throes of a culture war for the past half-century, but never has it been more imperative to buckle your seat belts until now. Quite frankly, the culture war is about to explode.

“The culture war pits traditionalists against modernists. To be more specific, it pits those who ascribe to the timeless values that inhere in faith, family and country against those who reject faith and family—traditionally understood—and who equate patriotism with jingoism.

“Who are these people who comprise the ranks of the modernists? They are people so thoroughly secularist that they literally loathe religion.

“Where do we find such persons? Many work in Hollywood, the media, the universities, the arts and in the non-profit sectors of the economy.

“We’re in for it. Why? Because the modernists feel emboldened after the November election. Please don’t misunderstand me—I am not blaming Barack Obama for all of what is about to happen. I am blaming many of those in the occupations I cited who see in his victory a golden opportunity to wage war on traditionalists. They are already revving it up; just wait until they kick it into high gear.”

Substitute Joe Biden for Barack Obama, and it’s déjà vu all over again. Only worse.

How could it be worse? Because those who are coming to work for Biden are coming in a fit of rage. This was not true of Obama’s supporters. To be sure, Biden may not be filled with hate, but many of those drawn to him certainly are. Inspired by the “Squad,” these AOC-America haters are coming to revolutionize, not reform.

We at the Catholic League will keep our eyes on three cabinet posts: the Department of Education, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Look for school choice reforms to die a quick death. Look for religious liberty to come under attack. Look for Catholic hospitals and non-profits to be weighed down under aggressive litigation.

It is what Biden symbolizes, and galvanizes, beyond the Beltway that should also concern people of faith. The most bigoted anti-Catholics in the nation are about to go on a tear.

Just consider what we are dealing with now, at a time when the current administration is staffed largely by traditionalists.

As this issue of *Catalyst* notes, the education establishment denied the Catholic League the opportunity to pay for a pro-Christmas message. Cartoon shows like "Family Guy" treat Catholics like dirt. The Supreme Court is hearing a challenge to the right of Catholic foster care programs to abide by Catholic strictures. Watch for issues like these to escalate.

The hatred that we saw spill into the streets this past spring, summer and fall is not going away. If anything, the thugs are emboldened. They started with tearing down statues of iconic Americans, and now they will try to tear down our institutions. For all the talk about unity, left-wing activists are masters of sowing distrust and disharmony. It's who they are.

Crippling the family has always been the dream of those who have set their sights on our Judeo-Christian heritage. Why? Those on the left live for one reason: power. They want to control our thinking and our behavior. They cannot do so if we pay homage to our family, not the state. For the same reason, they go after religion, and in this country, the bulls eye is the Catholic Church.

How bad will it get? Under Obama-Biden, they attacked the Little Sisters of the Poor and other Catholic non-profits. Now the goal will be the Equality Act. If enacted, it would gut religious autonomy, making religious institutions subservient to the state. In effect, it would complete the secularization of society, allowing us to pray in church, and not much more.

Regarding this last point, the masters of intolerance, who always finger people of faith as the intolerant ones, like to brag how magnanimous they are in allowing us to pray. They say they will not interfere with this right. Of course, they are giving us nothing. Our rights are enshrined in the Declaration

of Independence: they come from God, not politicians. Besides, how would they stop us from praying anyway?

I am not a pessimist, although these days it is a struggle to be optimistic. Yes, the country is deeply divided, but there are signs from the election results that many Americans are just as fed up as you and I are. They've had it with the violence, the hatred, the lies, the political correctness, and the assaults on our customs and traditions.

The good news is that there are no iron laws of history: the status quo is reversible. We are not impotent. Moreover, our side, that of the traditionalists, is as big and as energized as the other side.

The Catholic League will not disappoint you. We're in it for keeps. So buckle your seat belts—again.

Merry Christmas!

---

## ASSESSING “THE McCARRICK REPORT”

**Bill Donohue**

*This is my analysis of the “Report on the Holy See’s Institutional Knowledge and Decision-Making Related to Former Cardinal Theodore Edgar McCarrick,” or what is commonly known as “The McCarrick Report.” Much of what follows is a summary overview designed to spare readers the necessity of reading the 461-page document. It also includes my assessment of some key events.*

The “McCarrick Report” excels in providing abundant

information about the ascent of Theodore McCarrick to the highest ranks of the Catholic Church. No other study comes close to providing such rich material, much of it heretofore unknown to the public.

If there is one outstanding flaw, it was the refusal to interview Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò. This is especially unconscionable given that the Report mentions him 306 times, mostly to discredit him.[1] What makes this truly astonishing is that persons who were mentioned only a few times were interviewed. Thus, the decision not to interview Viganò was deliberate.

I never met Archbishop Viganò but I can attest to his integrity. In late 2015, after a notable Catholic contacted me about a bishop who refused to do anything about a rogue priest, I reached out to Viganò; at the time he was the Apostolic Nuncio to the U.S. He got right on it and acted responsibly. Indeed, he took my request to investigate this matter very seriously. This is important because he says the Report unfairly blames him for not investigating McCarrick, something which he vigorously denies.[2]

When I became president of the Catholic League in 1993, McCarrick was the Archbishop of Newark. At the time, our office was located in the Catholic Center at the Archdiocese of New York; Cardinal O'Connor was kind enough to move our office to the 20th floor, next to his office, so I got a chance to know him well.

I was only in the job for a few years when I received a call from McCarrick. I remember two salient comments he made. He was very kind, praising my work combating anti-Catholicism. But he also said something that rocked me: He said it was his desire to come across the Hudson and succeed Cardinal O'Connor as the next Archbishop of New York. Why, I thought, would he tell me this?

McCarrick's quest to assume this post apparently consumed him. As we learned from the Report, while talking to two bishops in 1990, he "pounded the table and blurted out 'I deserve New York.'"[3] His sense of entitlement was appalling.

It now becomes clear from reading the Report that one of McCarrick's characterological weaknesses, present from the beginning, was his excessively ambitious nature. It was in 1968 that McCarrick, then a monsignor, was first considered for elevation to the episcopate. Those charged with assessing his credentials were impressed by his multiple skills, but "several informants expressed concern that McCarrick might be overly 'ambitious.'"[4]

He was made Auxiliary Bishop in the Archdiocese of New York in 1977. Four years later, he was being considered to head a newly created diocese, the Diocese of Metuchen in New Jersey. He again impressed everyone. Yet there was a "sole concern," that being his "obvious ambition to be promoted in the ecclesiastical hierarchy." [5] He was a careerist, a priest whose quest for a red hat (to be a cardinal)—in one of the nation's most prestigious dioceses—proved to be an unhealthy preoccupation.

The first signs of trouble became apparent in the 1980s. That is when his homosexual escapades became known. At least three of the four bishops in New Jersey at the time failed to act responsibly: they allowed him to continue his predatory behavior unchecked.

McCarrick's penchant for seducing seminarians is well documented in the Report. His house in Sea Girt, down the Jersey Shore, was a favorite spot for him to lure these young men. He intentionally invited more men than he had beds for, and he did this with regularity. He didn't just sleep with these young men: He either attempted to have sex with them, or succeeded in doing so.[6]



What McCarrick did was not simply wrong—it was evil.

Evil is a strong word. It should not be used promiscuously. In a book that I have written about this subject, *Disabling the Catholic Church: The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse* (to be published later next year by Ignatius Press), I make it clear that while the molesting priests—the vast majority of whom were homosexuals—were sick men, it would be inaccurate to label most of them evil. The same cannot be said of McCarrick. Let's be honest: Any bishop who would stain young men preparing for the priesthood has the hand of the Devil on him.

McCarrick had some help from other priests. For example, Monsignor Anthony Joseph Gambino, after listening to a priest who told him what McCarrick did to him, Gambino had the nerve to admonish him.[7] Just as disconcerting, after Archbishop Gabriel Montalvo, the Apostolic Nuncio, learned from Father Boniface Ramsey in 2000 about McCarrick's sexually abusive behavior at his beach house, sharing beds with seminarians, Montalvo never got back to him.[8]

After McCarrick was appointed Archbishop of Newark in 1986, Bishop Edward T. Hughes succeeded him as the Bishop of Metuchen. When a priest came to Hughes relaying how McCarrick abused him, he listened carefully but never got back to him.[9] In fact, he never said a word to anyone in the U.S. or Rome. Hughes did the same to every other priest who confided in him.[10]

McCarrick not only abused seminarians at his beach house, he preyed on them at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York. One of them told Hughes—to no avail—that McCarrick “tried to convince me that priests engaging in sexual activity with each other was normal and accepted in the United States, and particularly in that diocese.”[11] To the extent this is true, it is proof of the homosexual network in the Catholic Church in the 1980s.

What did Hughes do when he heard this? Amazingly, he told the priest "to forget about McCarrick's misconduct and to forgive McCarrick 'for the good of the Church.'"[12] No one speaks this way simply to protect a fellow bishop. I have read too much about this issue to know that there was something else going on in Hughes' life that explains his response.

On January 25, 1990, soon after Bishop James McHugh was appointed to head the Diocese of Camden, he had dinner with three other priests: Monsignor Dominic Bottino, Newark Auxiliary Bishop John Smith, and a young cleric. In front of everyone, McCarrick started rubbing the crotch of the cleric. The young man froze while the others looked away. No one said a word.[13]

We know this because in 2018 Bottino finally admitted what happened. Neither bishop found what McCarrick did objectionable. In fact, McHugh even commended Bottino for the way he "handled" the incident.[14]

If the New Jersey bishops were delinquent, the Archbishop of New York proved to be meritorious. It was Cardinal John O'Connor, a man whom I worked with and greatly admired even before reading the Report, who had the courage to blow the whistle on McCarrick. Regrettably, he ran into opposition, both in the U.S. and in Rome.

In the early 1990s, Cardinal O'Connor started receiving anonymous complaints about McCarrick.[15] O'Connor knew McCarrick for many years, and he also knew how common it was to field all sorts of false complaints about priests, so he understandably passed the letters on to McCarrick. Then more letters of this sort reached O'Connor's desk. Also receiving copies was the Nuncio, Rev. Agostino Cacciavillan.[16] The Report notes that no investigation took place.[17] But things were only heating up.

In 1999, Cardinal O'Connor engaged the new Nuncio, Archbishop

Gabriel Montalvo, in a conversation about McCarrick's suitability to succeed him as Archbishop of New York. O'Connor warned him that there are "some elements of a moral nature that advised against" consideration of McCarrick's candidacy.[18] Influencing O'Connor were psychiatric reports on one of McCarrick's seminarian victims; a graphic account of McCarrick's behavior was provided.[19]

At the same time that McCarrick was being considered for the New York archdiocese, he was being assessed as a candidate to assume the duties at two other dioceses. He received the support of several bishops, who rallied to his side. Washington Archbishop James Cardinal Hickey named McCarrick as his number one choice for promotion.[20] Cardinal Bernard Law, Archbishop of Boston, was also supportive of McCarrick's candidacy, admitting, however, that "from time to time 'a cloud' appeared over McCarrick's head regarding what he termed a 'misplaced affection.'" [21] Others might call it sexual abuse.

O'Connor proved his chops when he wrote a six-page letter to Nuncio Montalvo; the letter was dated October 28, 1999.[22] It was so personal and confidential that the Archdiocese of New York does not have a copy of it.[23] But the Vatican does.

The case made against McCarrick was sober and convincing. O'Connor relied on the findings of Dr. Richard Fitzgibbons, a psychiatrist from Pennsylvania, and Monsignor James Cassidy, a psychologist from the Archdiocese of New York.[24] I did not know Cassidy (he died in 2015), but I have spoken to Fitzgibbons, and I am well aware of his outstanding work. I hold him in high regard. O'Connor did as well.

At the end of his letter, O'Connor said that he could not "in conscience, recommend His Excellency, Archbishop McCarrick for promotion to higher office..."[25] As we know, McCarrick had a wide network of allies, and they proved to be decisive, but not before McCarrick had a chance to weigh in against

O'Connor.

On August 6, 2000, three months after O'Connor died, McCarrick wrote to Bishop Stanislaw Dziwisz, particular secretary to Pope John Paul II, addressing O'Connor's allegations against him.[26] McCarrick admitted that friends of his in the Curia came across O'Connor's letter and "tipped me off about it." [27]

McCarrick accused O'Connor of "deeply attacking my life as a bishop," saying he knew O'Connor "did not want me as his successor." [28] He was apparently clueless as to why. Worse, he lied when he said, "I have never had sexual relations with any person, male or female, young or old, cleric or lay, nor have I ever abused another person or treated them with disrespect." [29]

It is a source of great disappointment that Pope John Paul II believed McCarrick, not O'Connor. [30] Whether it was his experience in Poland of hearing malicious lies about priests, as some have suggested, or his being surrounded by dupes, it is not clear. Perhaps both. According to Archbishop Viganò, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Secretary of State, was the one most responsible for convincing the pope to side with McCarrick. [31]

McCarrick did not succeed O'Connor but he was appointed Archbishop of Washington. He served from 2001 to 2006, without new accusations being made against him. [32] But he was confronted by Susan Gibbs, the archdiocese's communications director, and CNN reporter Connie Chung, about past allegations. He denied them all, admitting only to sharing beds with seminarians (as if this wasn't a problem in itself). [33]

On the eve of his 75th birthday, McCarrick submitted his required resignation to Pope Benedict XVI. Nuncio Montalvo wanted McCarrick to stay on for another two years, and

Benedict agreed.[34] But then new information about McCarrick's homosexual advances came to the pope's attention, and he quickly reversed his decision. McCarrick was told of the Holy Father's desire that he "immediately resign as Archbishop of Washington." [35] On May 16, 2006, Benedict accepted McCarrick's resignation.[36] His problems, however, were only beginning.

A month later, an attorney representing a priest who said McCarrick abused him met with Vatican officials. The priest described a fishing trip in upstate New York that took place in 1987. McCarrick invited him and two other priests to go with him. They had dinner and then went back to a local hotel to watch TV. Shortly after going to bed, the priest "rolled over and noticed the Archbishop and another priest having sex on another double bed. At that point the Archbishop noticed that I was looking and invited me to be 'next.' The other priest laughed and joked at the Archbishop's invitation for me to have sex with him." [37] Though shaken, he did not accept the invitation.

The priest subsequently offered more testimony about another incident. The Diocese of Metuchen reached a settlement with his claims in November 2006.[38]

More problems emerged when Richard Sipe, a former Benedictine monk and psychotherapist, sent a letter to Pope Benedict about McCarrick's sexual misconduct, providing a lot of information, including reports by Catholic journalist Matt Abbott.[39] Though Sipe's letter was posted on the internet, it received little attention by the media. Fortunately, it wasn't ignored in Rome.

In 2006, and again in 2008, Archbishop Viganò sent a memorandum to Pope Benedict XVI about what Sipe had said, and what he himself had learned about McCarrick.[40] The evidence of McCarrick's misconduct was mounting, becoming ever more difficult to deny, though some still tried to defend him.

Among them was Cardinal Kevin Farrell, who lived with McCarrick for 6 years in Washington. He claims he never heard of any wrongdoing, and indeed “never suspected, or ever had reason to suspect, any inappropriate conduct in Washington.”[41] That would make him unique.

McCarrick proved to be shameless. He was asked many times not to present himself in public and to quietly retire. As stubborn as he was self-serving, he blew everyone off. He even claimed victim status, contending that the proposed restrictions amounted to “persecution.”[42]

If there is one big mistake Benedict made, it was not laying down the law in writing.[43] When it comes to manipulative and self-absorbed people like McCarrick, the door must be shut firmly in their face, otherwise they will exploit any remaining opening.

This explains why McCarrick refused to abide by every request to curtail his public appearances—he saw the lack of teeth in the requests as evidence of their flatulence. He traveled all over the world under Benedict, and did so with greater ease under Pope Francis.[44]

When Pope Francis was elected in 2013, he said he never heard of any rumors related to McCarrick’s past sexual conduct. Similarly, he professed not to know of any restrictions on his travelling.[45] He said he assumed that allegations against McCarrick must have been without foundation, otherwise Pope John Paul II would have treated him differently.[46]

On June 23, 2013, Pope Francis agreed to meet with Archbishop Viganò; they met again on October 10. Five years later, on August 22, 2018, Viganò claimed that Pope Francis asked him about McCarrick during the June meeting. Viganò says he told him about “a dossier this thick” on McCarrick. “He corrupted generations of seminarians and priests and Pope Benedict ordered him to withdraw to a life of prayer and penance.”

Viganò added that McCarrick had committed “crimes” and was a “serial predator.”[47] Viganò says he discussed McCarrick’s exploits again at the October meeting.

According to the Report, Pope Francis “does not recollect what Viganò said about McCarrick during these two meetings.” In fact, he says he never knew a thing about McCarrick until the Archdiocese of New York revealed allegations against McCarrick in 2017.[48]

On June 8, 2017, the Archdiocese of New York received a complaint about McCarrick abusing a teenage male in the 1970s. Archbishop Timothy Cardinal Dolan had established an Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program to deal with past cases of priestly sexual abuse, and it was this mechanism that proved to be McCarrick’s last straw. This was the first time anyone had heard of McCarrick abusing a minor.[49]

An investigation of this matter concluded that the allegations against McCarrick were “credible and substantiated.”[50] Following the archdiocese’s policies, Dolan recommended that the case be made public. That was done on June 20, 2018, and on July 28, Pope Francis accepted McCarrick’s resignation from the College of Cardinals.[51]

This sad chapter in the history of the Catholic Church in the U.S. is now over. Most of the sexual abuse took place between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s. Media reports, however, continue to poison the public mind, having the public believe it is still ongoing. What they are reporting, in almost every instance, are past cases of abuse. Most of the bad guys are either dead or out of ministry.

Had the New Jersey bishops acted responsibly, McCarrick would not have been able to continue with his predatory behavior. How could this happen? Lurking behind all of this is the overwhelming presence of a homosexual network of priests, both

in the U.S. and in Rome. They are very good at covering for their own. Until and unless this web of deceit and perversion is owned up to—which it hasn't—lay Catholics will continue to be wary of the hierarchy.

We should not forget the heroes. Pope Benedict XVI has written with great clarity and honesty about the “filth” in the Church. Significantly, he understands the social and cultural dynamics that brought about the scandal as well as anyone. This has angered so-called progressive Catholics.

Their interest is not in telling the truth. Their interest is in diverting attention away from the homosexual origins of the scandal. They, and their allies in the media, continue to talk about the “pedophilia” scandal, when the fact is it has been a homosexual scandal all along. When we fail in the diagnosis, we fail in combating the malady.

Cardinal O'Connor, as we have seen, proved to be heroic. He should be a role model for every priest, regardless of rank. Had it not been for another New York archbishop, Cardinal Dolan, McCarrick might have gotten away with it. How many other institutions in our society, secular as well as religious—many have been plagued with sexual abuse—have ever brought charges against one of their own offenders at the top rungs of their organization? There are none.

There will be much more written on this subject, but for now at least, we have in “The McCarrick Report” a much better understanding of how the breakdown in accountability happened. What still needs to be addressed is why it broke down, and what steps can be taken to make sure it never happens again. That is something I discuss in my new book.

### **ENDNOTES**

1 Archbishop Vigano made this comment on the Nov. 12 episode of Raymond Arroyo's EWTN show, “The World Over,” Nov. 12, 2020.



- 2 Ibid.
- 3 "The McCarrick Report," p. 91.
- 4 Ibid., p. 23.
- 5 Ibid., p. 27.
- 6 Ibid., pp. 70-71.
- 7 Ibid., p. 73.
- 8 Ibid., p. 190.
- 9 Ibid., p. 76.
- 10 Ibid., p. 77.
- 11 Ibid., pp. 84-85.
- 12 Ibid., p. 87.
- 13 Ibid., p. 92.
- 14 Ibid., p. 93.
- 15 Ibid., pp. 95-99.
- 16 Ibid., pp. 101-10
- 17 Ibid., p. 111.
- 18 Ibid., p. 129.
- 19 Ibid., pp. 117-23.
- 20 Ibid., p. 130.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Ibid., p. 131.
- 23 Ibid., p. 140.
- 24 Ibid., pp. 134, 137.
- 25 Ibid., 139.
- 26 Ibid., p. 169.
- 27 Ibid., p. 170.
- 28 Ibid., pp. 169-70.
- 29 Ibid., p. 170.
- 30 Ibid., pp. 173-74.
- 31 "The World Over," EWTN
- 32 "The McCarrick Report," p. 211.
- 33 Ibid., pp. 215-219.
- 34 Ibid., pp. 230-31.
- 35 Ibid., p. 232.
- 36 Ibid., p. 246.
- 37 Ibid., p. 251.
- 38 Ibid., p. 260.

- 39 Ibid., pp. 279-81.
  - 40 Ibid., pp. 282-86.
  - 41 Ibid., p. 290.
  - 42 Ibid., p. 308.
  - 43 Ibid., p. 298.
  - 44 Ibid., pp. 370-72.
  - 45 Ibid., p. 394.
  - 46 Ibid., pp. 401-02.
  - 47 Ibid., pp. 403-04.
  - 48 Ibid., pp. 404-05.
  - 49 Ibid., p. 433.
  - 50 Ibid., p. 434.
  - 51 Ibid., p. 435.
- 

## **BIDEN OUT OF STEP WITH BISHOPS AGAIN**

As we know, there is no marriage, family, or reproductive issue that Joe Biden is on the same page with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). What has gotten by most observers, however, is his support for gender theory, a fictional construct that argues if a male considers himself to be a female, he is. Pope Francis has condemned this crazed idea as “demonic.”

Thanks to CNSNews, we learned that the Biden campaign’s website is flagging their candidate’s pledge to allow boys to compete against girls in girls’ sports. To qualify, all the boys have to do is say they are a girl, and bingo—they can compete. This is considered equality, even though it puts real girls in an unequal position.

Allowing boys who self-identify as a girl to crash girls' athletics—and to use the same locker room and shower facilities—is not a side issue for Catholic Joe. No, his website says he will act on this pledge on “his first day in office.” Too bad he never told the country what a pressing issue this is for him.

More bad luck for the Biden camp. On October 27, 2020, Bishop Michael C. Barber, S.J., of Oakland, chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Catholic Education, and Bishop David A. Konderla of Tulsa, chairman of the Subcommittee for the Protection and Defense of Marriage, wrote a letter to members of Congress supporting the Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act of 2020.

This bill affirms the right of boys and girls to compete exclusively against those of their own sex, providing no allowance for the sexually confused. It would stop entities that receive federal funds under Title IX from “permitting male students to participate in athletic programs designated for women and girls.”

The bishops note that while transgender students should not be harassed, their condition is one of “gender identity discordance.” It must be said, they stressed, that allowing boys to join a girls' athletic team would be “a loss for basic fairness and the spirit of Title IX.”

Thus, the Biden campaign is once again out of step with the bishops.

We at the Catholic League have only one question: Why would Catholic Joe want to fight so hard for a cause the Holy Father labels “demonic”?

---

# TRUMP DIDN'T CREATE INCIVILITY

After watching President Trump for the past few years, *New York Times* columnist David Brooks recently opined that he fully expected “the country would rise up in moral revulsion” at his gruff style. He is dumbfounded at the outcome. “Trump’s behavior got worse and worse...and nothing happened.”

There are plenty of reasons why. The mainstreaming of incivility in our culture tops the list.

For several decades now, the public has become so inundated with crassness that it has become increasingly inured to expressions of it. That is why it smacks of naiveté to express horror when our elites adopt the cues of the dominant culture. This isn’t the 1950s.

Howard Stern is more than a shock-jock: He epitomizes the coarseness of our culture, and his fans are legion. Moreover, he has inspired many others to follow suit. Kathy Griffin, Sarah Silverman, Bill Maher, Louis C.K., Samantha Bee—just to name a few—have contributed mightily to the dumbing-down of our culture. Just think how vile they are when compared to Lucille Ball, Milton Berle, Bob Hope, Jerry Lewis, Groucho Marx and Dean Martin.

It is not just the lyrics that have changed in the music world; it’s the behavior exhibited on MTV and BET. The filth of the songs is routine, as are the crotch-grabbing antics. Cardi B’s best-selling “WAP” is another index of our gutter culture, and it does not speak well of Joe Biden that he gave this vicious misogynist a high-profile interview during the Democratic National Convention. The success of Miley Cyrus is another index of our moral destitution.

“South Park” and “Family Guy” are demonstrative of our

nation's moral health, as is the popularity of non-stop "genital jokes" on network sit-coms. Movies that were once given an "R" rating are now "PG-13," if not "PG." And it is next to impossible for responsible parents to screen all that is available online to their children.

There was a time, not long ago, when students would be suspended from school for foul language. Now they can curse out their teachers with impunity. Worse, affluent suburban parents who are notified of the offensive behavior of their children are as likely to express umbrage at the principal as they are their child.

Social media has played a big role in corrupting our culture. The idea of liberty as license is on full display, and attempts to mitigate it are resisted. An array of court decisions, starting in the 1960s, did much to lower the moral bar. Incivility and indecency were redefined as freedom of expression, and the results are everywhere today. When Rep. Rashida Tlaib called President Trump a "motherf\*\*\*\*\*," what price did she pay? None. Why the silence? Tip O'Neill would never have allowed her to escape without a sanction.

Trump's abandonment of established presidential etiquette has gotten out of hand on many occasions. It is easy to understand why people complain. Whether it is reason enough to negate the success of his policies, as compared to Biden's record of 47 years, is another matter altogether.

We have a right to expect our presidents to rise above the fray. But in the end, Trump is a reflection of what our cultural elites have wrought. It is a little late in the game to cry foul at this point. We reap what we sow.

---

# VOTERS SPLIT ON STATE ABORTION LAWS

Voters in Colorado and Louisiana considered abortion legislation on election day and went in opposite directions. The voters not only have nothing in common on this issue, their preferences are rooted in their religious values, or the lack thereof.

Louisiana voters passed an amendment to the state constitution that forbids the right to an abortion or the public funding of it. This means that even if *Roe v. Wade* were overturned, abortion rights cannot be established in the state. The measure passed by a wide margin. It was sponsored by a black female Democrat, State Sen. Katrina Jackson; she is a Baptist.

A pro-abortion activist told CNN that “we must keep fighting because women—not just those of means but all women and all people who can become pregnant—deserve the basic right to bodily autonomy...” (My italics.) She did not identify who, other than women, can get pregnant. Nor did the reporter ask her what creature, or creatures, she was talking about. No matter, she wins a gold star for inclusivity.

Colorado has one of the most relaxed abortion laws in the nation. Indeed, it is one of seven states that permits women to terminate their pregnancy any time they want, right up until birth. Some residents said that was a bridge too far and managed to place a proposition on the ballot to ban abortions after the 22nd week of pregnancy. They lost. Approximately 6 in 10 voters rejected the ban.

Why are the voters in these two states so different? Much of the divide can be explained by looking at their religiosity profile, namely the extent to which they differ on religious beliefs and practices.

In terms of an overall religiosity scale, a Pew Research study placed Louisiana at number 4; Colorado ranked 41st. For example, 75% of Louisianans believe in God and 71% consider religion important; the figures for Coloradans are 55% and 47%, respectively.

At first glance, it seems surprising that when it comes to asking whether there are “clear standards of what is right and wrong,” or whether “right and wrong depend on the situation,” there is no difference between the two states. The figures for the two questions for those who live in Louisiana are 38% and 59%; they are 37% and 59% for residents of Colorado.

A closer look reveals that what matters is the source of one’s notions of right and wrong. Religion is the source of right and wrong for 43% of Louisianans, yet it is only 29% for Coloradans; the other two categories are philosophy/reason and common sense.

There is a profound difference between looking to God-based determinants of right and wrong and determinants of a more personal kind. The former for Christians would be the Ten Commandments; for the latter it would be their own moral compass. Thus, the content of our moral values is necessarily reflected in their source.

To put it another way, those in Louisiana are more likely to see abortion as the killing of innocent human beings, something which is proscribed by the Ten Commandments. Those who look to their own values are more likely to make decisions based on what they want, or feel, not on what God ordains.

It should come as no surprise that given the low levels of religiosity in the lives of Coloradans that they would not countenance restrictions on their sexual liberties any more than they would put up with restrictions on their drug use: marijuana was legalized a decade ago. Unfortunately, five years after they did so they had a three-fold increase in pot

heads being admitted to the emergency rooms. Vomiting, racing hearts and psychosis are the most common ailments.

In other words, the hospitals in Louisiana and Colorado are very different. In the latter, they kill babies in the third trimester and flood their wards with drug abusers. In Louisiana, these problems are minimal. It all depends on the source of our moral values.

---

## **NOT ALL PROTESTERS ARE THUGS**

The difference between the pro-Trump and the pro-Biden protesters in the aftermath of the election is stark. The former were peaceful; the latter were violent.

Nothing symbolizes the difference between the protesters more than what happened on November 5th in Phoenix and Portland. In Phoenix, Trump supporters gathered outside of Arizona's Maricopa County Elections office to pray; they did so the night before as well.

In Portland, the protesters (they were certainly anti-Trump if not necessarily pro-Biden) vandalized a Catholic church, one known for its outreach to the poor and homeless. Even Oregon Gov. Kate Brown couldn't believe what happened. "They shattered the windows of a church that feeds Oregonians in need."

The violence that left-wing activists engaged in has been going on all year. But the week after the election, they kicked it up a notch.

On election night, several arrests were made in Seattle when left-wing activists took to the streets. They left nails in a



roadway and destroyed property. That same night in Washington D.C., Trump supporters were stabbed near the White House and a police van was vandalized. In Minneapolis, police were attacked, fires were set, and property was damaged; fourteen were arrested for creating a riot. In Los Angeles, more than 40 people were arrested for creating havoc.

On November 4th, Portland exploded, necessitating the presence of the National Guard. Loaded rifles were taken, as were explosive devices, knives and spray-paint. That same night, left-wing protesters took over downtown Minneapolis and Interstate 94.

Also on November 4th, New York City was the scene of dozens of arrests. Fires were set, the head of the NYPD was attacked, and another officer was assaulted. Devina Singh, a crazed woman with an arrest record, spat in the face of a police officer, taunting him with obscenities.

On November 5th, a protester choked a police officer with a chain and many arrests were made.

Now contrast the Trump haters with the Trump supporters. On November 5th, they showed up in Philadelphia and Milwaukee waving American flags. In Las Vegas, 400 protesters gathered outside of Clark County Election Department blasting patriotic anthems over loud speakers while waving American flags.

Not all protesters are thugs. For the most part, conservatives are prayerful and patriotic. They do not attack the police, set fires, loot and vandalize churches. It is those on the left who act like savages, the ones that Joe Biden and Kamala Harris find it hard to condemn.

---

# THE NEED TO CLAIM AOC CATHOLIC

There isn't much left of Catholic "progressives" these days, which explains why they are trying so hard to find a public person whom they can anoint as one of their own. They think they have found such a person in Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC).

"I consider myself Catholic," AOC told a reporter.

That is not how Catholics speak of themselves. They simply say they are Catholic. Indeed, it is not how most people articulate any of their multiple identities. Imagine someone saying, "I consider myself to be Irish," or "I consider myself to be an author." Why the need to hedge? There is nothing subjective about being Catholic, Irish, or an author. You either are or you are not.

Ironically, AOC's tentativeness is warranted. For example, she did not tell the reporter that she has been a Catholic all her life; rather, she said she "grew up in the Catholic faith" (while noting her mother is not Catholic). More important, to what extent does she take her moral cues from her Catholic background?

One of AOC's fawning reporters said that after listening to an address AOC gave on the House floor, she was "struck by how often it referenced Catholic values." The subject of AOC's speech was the need to respect women. Fine, but there is nothing inherently Catholic about that stance; even non-believers agree. Moreover, it was not AOC who credited her Catholicism for her view—it was the author.

The Catholic Left wants the public to think that AOC's Catholicism is evident in her social justice positions. But how kind was AOC to the poor when she fought an attempt by

Amazon to set up shop in her district? Because of her effort, an estimated 25,000 to 40,000 jobs were lost.

How kind is AOC to the poor by consigning them to failed public schools? She is opposed to all school choice initiatives, except for those that touch her personally: She bragged about getting her Goddaughter into a charter school.

The poor are the ones most affected by crime, and they are not proponents of defunding the police. AOC is. In fact, she wants to abolish the prisons. Just whose neighborhoods does she think the felons will repair to once released?

Children are among the most vulnerable Americans. AOC says we have too many of them. That is why last year she raised the question, "Is it okay to still have children?" This sheds great light on her enthusiasm for abortion rights.

AOC is supposed to be a friend to minorities. Yet she is a strong ally of Linda Sarsour, a vicious anti-Semite. More recently, just a few months ago AOC ripped Father Damien, the 19th century priest who gave his life serving lepers on the Hawaiian island of Molokai. She said this heroic priest was guilty of patriarchy and white supremacy.

If AOC is the best the Catholic Left can do in their quest to find a leader, they are in serious trouble.

---

## **FEINSTEIN'S SECOND CATHOLIC MOMENT**

When Sen. Dianne Feinstein made a patently anti-Catholic comment in 2017, saying to circuit-court nominee Amy Coney Barrett, "the dogma lives loudly within you," Bill Donohue wrote to the senator expressing his concerns. More important, he mobilized thousands of Catholics to email Sen. Charles

Grassley, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, about Feinstein's bigoted remark. Now Feinstein is back in the news with a hot-mic quip about Barrett's Catholicism.

Speaking about Barrett, Feinstein was caught saying, "She's been pro-life for a long time. So, I suspect with her, it is deeply personal and comes with her religion."

Feinstein was recently rapped for making another anti-Catholic remark. She should not have been. What she said was not anti-Catholic. But Donohue hastened to add that coming from someone who previously made an anti-Catholic comment about Barrett, Feinstein's second Catholic moment told us a lot about who she is.

Feinstein was correct to say Barrett is "pro-life," which is an accurate way to characterize what is usually understood by those on the other side as "anti-choice." And, yes, for practicing Catholics, such a conviction—which is also confirmed by science—being pro-life is "deeply personal." But given what Feinstein previously said about Barrett's Catholicity, it appears that she was positively awestruck by her sincerity.

Feinstein is not alone. Secularists abound in the media, the arts, the entertainment industry and education. At best, they look at people like Barrett in wonderment, almost as if they are from some other universe; at worst, they hate them. Feinstein falls into the former category.

It is somewhat surprising for Feinstein to be puzzled by a Catholic's deeply personal faith. After all, she graduated from Convent of the Sacred Heart High School. However, she also attended a Jewish temple—her father was Jewish—and spent time in a Jewish day school. So perhaps she never found anchor in either religion; she is not known to be a practicing member of any faith.

Elites in all walks of life are acutely sensitive to

stereotypes, expressing horror whenever generalizations are made about people of color, et al. Moreover, they are constantly urging us to meet people who are different from us so we can understand their point of view. The one exception to this maxim is people of faith, especially Christians. For us, they just stare. That's if we're lucky. Others seek to silence us.

Feinstein congratulated Barrett during the hearings for her "impressive" command of the facts. That was kind of her. Now if she could only sit down and spend some time really listening to people like Barrett—getting to know them the way she knows dogmatic secularists—that would make her a better person. Not only that, we would all benefit from that outcome.